

IRELAND'S CHURCH PROPERTY,

AND

THE RIGHT USE OF IT.

BY

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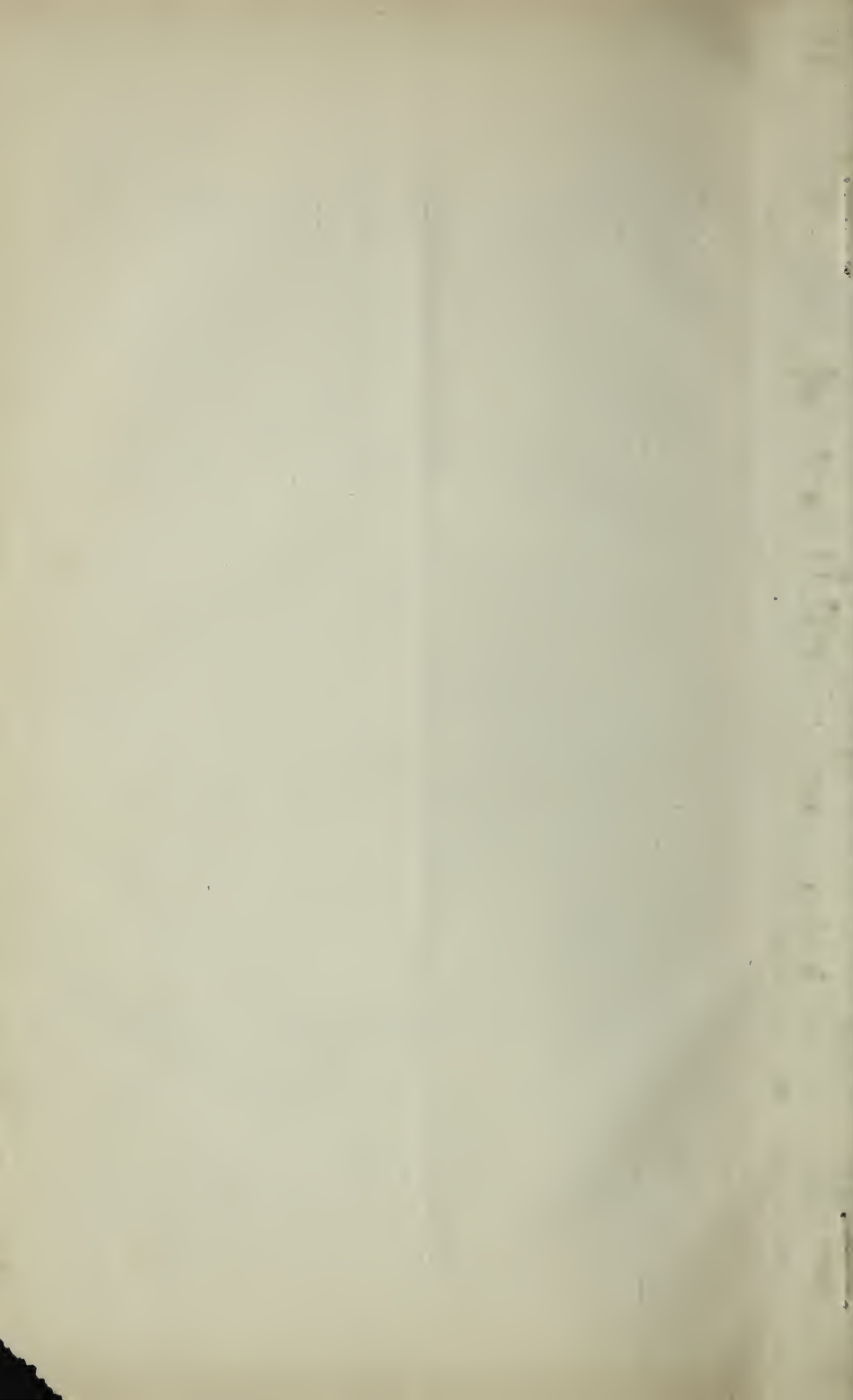
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EARLY last year I published in two of the chief Irish newspapers some letters on the rival schemes for the attainment of "Religious Equality in Ireland"—one of these schemes being the just Distribution of the Irish Church Property, and the other its Secularization. The substance of those letters will be found, with considerable additions, in the last three chapters of the present Pamphlet. To them I have prefixed an introductory chapter in further illustration of the Church Question.

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# IRELAND'S CHURCH PROPERTY,

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### I.

#### INTRODUCTORY.

ONCE more we hear of Ireland's Church Question, and therefore there is hope for Ireland. The periods alike of servile sloth and of bootless strivings draw to an end. That question made itself often heard from the enactment of Catholic Emancipation to those heady days when youthful politicians talked about "Physical Force," and proclaimed that "If the altar stood in the way of Liberty, the altar must go down." Their enthusiasm, and the famine years (for folly and fate are ever confederate), threw the cause of Ireland back a quarter of a century; and the voices which, in England, had witnessed to justice during the debates on the far-famed "Appropriation Clause," were heard no more. Till then the cause of Religious Equality had made steady progress; and if, like that of Emancipation, it had been elevated to its proper place, it too must have triumphed. Liberal statesmen, recluse thinkers, grave divines, had asserted with ever increasing energy, that peace under the Church Settlement of Ireland was a chimera; that it was a thing against reason and against nature; nay, that they would despise the Irish if they could rest contented under a yoke which Englishmen would not endure for a day, and against which Scotchmen had wielded the claymore.\* Then, as now, there was the superficial retort—"the most agitated classes in Ireland think more of other matters than of the Church Question." But the answer was also made—"A people feel when

\* The most important of their statements were published some time since by me in a Pamphlet, the Preface of which alone is my own. "*The Church Establishment in Ireland, illustrated exclusively by Protestant authorities.*"—(Warren, Dublin.)

they are amiss, but do not always know where the true remedy lies." It might have been added, "They are not bound to know it. Feeling is not done by proxy; but it is for the Legislature, and the classes that have leisure, to think for the nation. If they force it to do its own thinking, their proper office is gone; and the thinking may be done but indifferently. It is for them to interpret the cry that comes from a nation's heart, and rightly to apply those moral principles which are often more profoundly appreciated by the conscience of a nation than by the schools."

Again we hear of Ireland's Church Question. In England not a few have proclaimed that Ireland is entitled to Religious Equality. Upon that matter Irish Catholics are agreed; and the question for them to consider is, whether Religious Equality should be reached by the secularization of the Church property, or by its fair distribution between the Catholics and Protestants. The alternative is all important. It is when things wear a good promise that prudence is most needful; and the ship that has braved all the terrors of the voyage sometimes strikes a rock at the harbour's mouth. I cannot doubt that some at least among those who prefer secularization, perhaps as the plan more immediately practicable, have flung themselves on it without a due consideration of all that is at stake. What Ireland needs on this great subject now approaching its solution is a clear insight, a calm temper, and a resolute prudence. Prudence is a virtue seldom exercised, even when possessed, except by those who can count on results. We are thus brought, before discussing the point at issue, to the question, "Is a result to be looked for? Are not even the friends of Religious Equality often deluded by the cavils of its enemies? Can we rely on such friends? Is it not better to trust some chance alliance, and crisis of parties?" Before proceeding to the main question, I will endeavour to reply to such misgivings by indicating the weakness of some of the cavils referred to.

What then is the objection we hear most of just now? It is the old retort in a new dress. Men say—"The Fenians do not demand Religious Equality." Is it then for the Fenians to determine our legislation? England will not long believe this. The Fenians are our Americo-Irish Socialists—one section of a conspiracy which works its unholy catacombs beneath the civilization of the world. In every nation every wrong will add to their numbers, stimulate their energies, and arm them with instruments; but in none have they yet been ostensibly called into the seat of counsel, or invested even with a negative voice. The Fenians professedly



aim at Revolution:—why then should they seek Reform, and thus remove the abuse that supplies a fulcrum to their lever? Were this allegation more than specious it would prove that Ireland is in a perfect state; for it is not with any detail of British Government that the Fenians quarrel:—the existence of that Government is with them the unforgivable sin. What can the objection mean? Fenianism comes to us from America. It is simply Irish discontent recast in the mould of a nation that has not, like Ireland, inherited for twenty centuries monarchical or aristocratic traditions, but makes its boast of—what alone seems left to a new nation—Democracy. How could this foreign intervention occupy itself with constitutional reforms? But, it will be said, there is the Irish as well as the American Fenianism—the Fenianism that responds, but does not initiate. Doubtless there is; but in what relation does it stand to Ireland? The nation is agitated by a permanent discontent, produced by a whole system of social relations sophisticated or false, of which an ecclesiastical anomaly is at once the type, the original cause, and the sustaining principle. Fenianism is a resultant from that general social disorganization, but does not on that account stand in *direct* connection with that anomaly which yet is its ultimate cause. The relations of these two extreme terms are indirect, though certain, and they are separated by many removes. Let us trace the connection. The ecclesiastical anomaly sets classes at variance:—variance produces insecurity: insecurity paralyses industry:—the absence of productive industry perpetuates poverty:—and out of that poverty, which intensifies the discontent that gave it birth, rises a bewildered, weltering sea of disturbance, over which Fenianism races at this moment. Fenianism of course does not give us the complete measure of that of which it is but a chance growth. Who could take it for such? Is Ireland the only country in which some evil, deep-seated and but too real, has produced an eruption of superficial follies? If French Jacobins talked nonsense instead of proposing solid reforms, is that a proof that in France, before the first Revolution, there were no abuses to be corrected? When Mazzinianism was the chief form of protest against such misgovernment as prevailed in Naples, did it follow that there were no real wrongs, the redress of which would have been the interpretation of the blind want, and the cure of the wild desire? In England, before the Reform Bill of 1832, burning ricks had become a mistaken exponent of a discontent that was no mistake;—and the Anti-Reformers probably reversed the lesson which they would not learn. Let us not judge by appearance, but judge righteous

judgment. Fenianism is but a symptom; and symptoms of the most opposite sort represent, or misrepresent, the same malady. We must not mistake for the ground-swell the foam that crests the wave. Foam and froth fly whatever way the wind blows: the tide that lifts the wave more often moves in an opposite direction.

From Fenianism, indeed, there are lessons to be learned; but not by those who make oracles of its follies. One of these we may glean from a hint thrown out by Mr. Alexander Knox, who wrote to Lord Castlereagh just after the Rebellion of 1798. The insurgents of that time, like the Fenians of our day, had not been the party to make reasonable demands, though such had been made abundantly by others; but men of sagacity did not, therefore, conclude that no abuses existed. Mr. Knox knew that the triumph over rebellion is not the end, but the beginning of a great task, and he aimed at the real pacification of Ireland. Referring to some wrongs which the Presbyterians of Ulster had suffered in the eighteenth century, he wrote: "Their situation in Ireland, no doubt, encouraged emigration to America. Certain it is that they carried thither much of that spirit which excited and supported the Revolution there, and which, of course, has no little contributed to the events which have revolutionized *so much of the continent of Europe*." If a handful of fugitives proved so dangerous, what is to be expected from a fugitive nation?

Let us glance at another lesson that may be learned from Fenianism. Twice an outbreak, either intended or simulated, has been driven back—or driven in;—and with which side lies the success so far? Fenianism chooses its time, and visits Ireland when it pleases; and if it should but keep her in that insecurity which means poverty and turbulence, it will thus most effectually win the battle which it never fought. To say that the disloyal in Ireland are the few, is to say nothing. The real question is a different one. What of the many who are not disloyal? Are they loyal—and in what sense of the word? They are scattered and without organization:—are they proof against intimidation? How many are those who desire to have no quarrel, whether with the Government or the enemies of the Government? What of the "Broad School" in Irish Politics? These Latitudinarians are very dangerous in the political sphere, where principles, and the absence of principles, alike are brought to a practical issue. It is a bad war when the victor has to exclaim with the King of Epirus, "A few more such victories and I am a ruined man," and a bad peace when neither content nor prosperity remains as its fruit. This new danger from foreign sympathisers is not



peculiar to England : it is what the Pope—a great reforming Pope while he was free from it—has had to deal with. Fenianism can keep the Empire ill at ease, and that at a very moderate cost to itself, as long as it pleases ; and we cannot depend upon our being always without other foes. This is not a lesson likely to be lost upon England.

Another objection is sometimes made. Let us consider it. The demand for Religious Equality offends the political Quietists. But in modern politics the Lotos Isle is dangerously near the Volcanic Isle. Let its children ask themselves whether they would not have been equally troubled fifteen years ago if a resolute but constitutional demand for complete Religious Equality had been made in Ireland, and whether they would not now give much that the demand had been made by all Ireland, and the question settled. The demand does not mean war, it means peace. In our days there are two conditions that preclude peace. It cannot exist so long as a nation demands the impossible, or so long as it fails to demand and to win its rights. In the days of the “Monster Meetings” how often men said, “Could Ireland but rest for five years from agitation, what progress would she not make !” For three times that number of years there has been comparatively little of organized agitation—less than that which caused the triumph of Free Trade in England—but the stopping of the sore has apparently but envenomed the blood. Once more, how many said, “The idle must always be dangerous, and Ireland has 2,000,000 of inhabitants idle from necessity.”\* The population has diminished, not by two millions, but by more than three : but the discontent of the poor, and the alarm of the rich, has increased. The remedy lies elsewhere. In Swift’s time a population of but 1,500,000 was in rags. Stagnation under wrong may be called peace ; but it means only that a burning heart is left to brood in silence over its sorrow till a witless brain has conceived that “Portent-Birth”—the fell purpose of revenge. Matters must not be left in this state. In Ireland it is known that of the political question a religious question is the soul. It is

\* We need not here discuss the question whether this statement was a correct one, or whether it was an exaggeration based upon two assumptions, the first that Ireland was not to have manufactures, the second that, while manufactures were establishing themselves, an unusually large rural population could not have been employed upon bringing up the arrears of Irish agriculture, and producing that state of things which dispenses with a large expenditure of manual labour in England and Scotland. Except upon those two assumptions, emigration might, in Ireland, as in all other countries, have remained within the limits of what can reasonably be called voluntary, and it need not have been an emigration of the discontented.

not wonderful, therefore, if the grave and responsible have resolved to seek a remedy for wrong, as Englishmen do, *i.e.*, by means at once determined and constitutional, including neither violence nor the threat of violence. This resolve is full of loyalty at once to the Sovereign and the country. To demand what is reasonable, and to demand no more, is to do a statesman the greatest of services—it gives him the opportunity of settling dangerous questions on honorable terms.

The objectors are ignorant that those whom they fancy to be enemies of peace demand their country's rights, not from contentiousness, but by a moral compulsion. They can see this in the case of remote countries, and why not in their own? Our rights are the rights of others; and to abandon them, though by no means necessarily a loss to self (for to contract for a separate peace may be profitable, as well as grateful to sloth), is perfidy to those whose representatives we are. It is treachery also to the objectors themselves, and beguiles them into perpetuating an injustice against which their conscience might otherwise have revolted, and which sooner or later they will have to expiate. But, above all, by such illicit consent, we enter into complicity with that of which the material evil is but the smallest part. If injustice only pauperised a nation it might be forgiven; but the great argument in favour of Right is—that Wrong demoralizes it, especially when constitutional rights have been in part conferred, and when corresponding duties in part exist. Men seem passive under unequal laws: but are they at rest? No! Do they condone the past? No! Do they make the engagements or contract the habits that pre-suppose a peaceful future? No! Do they recognise their position as citizens dwelling within the fold of the Constitution? They never professed anything of the sort, nor thought that it was seriously expected from them. They regard themselves as a native tribe, encamped outside the settlement of the military colonists, now trafficking with them on friendly terms, and now carrying on the old feud. A less picturesque condition is needed for several of the moral virtues, especially for industry, frankness, and the forgiveness of injuries; though none is better fitted to sustain the barbaric. Injustice wages war against the *soul* of a nation, not only by stimulating vices (which it has afterwards to punish), but also by giving a misdirection to its virtues;—it is for this cause that the wrath it kindles burns in the heart of the grave and religious with a solid heat. It is no wonder if those who are responsible for the national morals have grappled with the wrong.

On the whole we may safely believe that statesmen who with any considerable clearness recognise the justice of conceding to Ireland Religious Equality, will not be shaken by such objections, or such misgivings, as we have been discussing. Another objection, indeed, is sometimes made—the opposite of the one last considered. It is this. “The wrong is plain enough and deep enough, as Englishmen see and feel such things; but Ireland seems to have a different scale of justice or point of honour, and has often seemed less hurt at her religion being degraded than the Protestant minority would be if theirs were reduced to merely equal rights.” To this objection a sufficient answer will doubtless ere long be given by Ireland. But, apart from all such objections, it will be said, “before we decide on our method of action, we should understand the motives of those we shall have to address.” To know men’s opinions is nothing unless we know out of what they spring. Is the present improved condition of the public mind, relatively to the Church Question, connected with a merely transient state of things.—Has it a root in itself? Will it last?

I answer—yes; for it is in harmony at once with justice and expediency—yes; because it results not from theory, but from the teaching of time. The changes made by the whole course of modern history have altered the nature of the problems that remain to be solved. A progress has also taken place in the mind of man—not only as regards political matters, but others above or outside the sphere of politics—which renders it impossible that the Ascendency should last; and, therefore, the real question is not what may be the most “thorough” mode of overthrowing it, but what is the wisest mode of replacing it. The improved condition of the public mind may be connected with mixed motives, as is common in politics; but we need build on the nobler only. To this subject we will now turn our attention; and having thus noted the intellectual conditions of the time, and glanced at some moral considerations connected with the point at issue—we shall be better qualified, passing from this preliminary matter, to discuss, in the last three chapters, the momentous question—whether, judged according to the interests of Ireland, her Church property should be secularized, or redeemed from abuse and rightly distributed.

1. We must not do injustice to those from whom we differ. The virtues by a full appreciation of which we shall gain most are those of our opponents; and the faults which we can criticise with the best advantage are our own. The Church Settlement



of Ireland has long sat heavy upon the conscience of England ; and it has been sustained in part for the same reason that unjust laws have often been sustained in Catholic countries, viz., because it is difficult to get rid of what has existed long. Till the moment comes for suppressing an evil, even those who dislike it do not allow themselves to see it wholly as it is. The few see it full-faced. The many stand obliquely to it—wishing that they had not to deal with the matter—and see “ the utmost part thereof.” At last events give them leave to see. We cannot then but observe that in many lands those colossal wrongs have been cancelled which made wrong on a smaller scale seem respectable. In Russia serfdom is abolished, and in America slavery. Throughout half Europe violent revolutions have taken place of which equal rights were either the sanction or the pretext, and England has sympathised with them : yet before these changes Lord Macaulay, and men like him, had declared that the existing Ascendency in Ireland was a wrong and an absurdity without precedent in Europe, Asia, America, or any known part of Africa. It may be answered that Lord Macaulay was an orator. Take then the words of a sagacious man who withheld himself from party strifes. “ That Church (the Irish Establishment) and its history present a melancholy subject of contemplation. Founded in proscription and violence, it has not only imperfectly fulfilled the duties and accomplished the objects of a Christian Church, but it has been, from first to last, the source of an incalculable amount of moral and political evil : utterly failing to draw within its fold the great body of the Christian flock, it has itself been made an object of spoliation, and the instrument of an insulting domination.”\* And again—“ To the internal state of that country (Ireland) no parallel can be found ; nor was there ever any other, in which for 500 years no interval of peace occurred, except, perhaps, in Spain, from the invasion of the Arabs to the conquest of Granada.”† “ A cloud of witnesses” have testified against the scandal, and the moral sense of England cannot in any case long remain proof against the appeal. It is brought home to her by facts. England is always more accessible to the teaching of facts than to refined reasoning. Much dialectic skill has been used to vindicate a plain violation of the moral law :—but the facts of Ireland confute it with the Prophet’s demand—“ What meaneth then this bleating of sheep in mine ears ?”

2. The common sense of England speaks even more plainly

\* *Past and Present Policy*, &c. p. 335.

† *Ibid.* p. 352.

than her moral sense. Had the Irish question been settled in Mr. Pitt's time, what should we be doing now? Paying off our debts, as America is paying off hers. People have lived under such absurd misconceptions about both Pitt and Burke—worshipping the legendary Divinities they had set up under those august names, and traducing the men themselves—that the imposture has with some become an inveterate delusion. Thus they appeal to Mr. Pitt's "Act of Union" as though it guaranteed the endowments of the Irish Establishment. It did nothing of the sort. It guaranteed the number of the Bishops—and that guarantee has not been adhered to—but it did not guarantee the temporalities. Mr. Pitt expressly refused to do this. He regarded the future settlement of the Church Question as essential to the Act of Union; and he, therefore, left himself perfectly free. This was pointed out in 1835 by the highest of all authorities on such a subject, Lord Chancellor Plunkett, a zealous defender of the Irish Establishment, but an approver not less of the "Appropriation Clause." "By the Act of Union the Churches of England and Ireland were consolidated. By the fifth article of that Act they were identified in doctrine, worship, and discipline; but was there anything in that article which identified the temporal possessions of the Church of Ireland with those of the Church of England? There was nothing of the kind. The Irish temporalities were altogether distinct from those of the Church of England. If they were not so, they had been violating the articles of Union ever since they were passed." The statements of Lord Holland, Sir H. Ward, Earl Grey, Earl Russell, and Lord Macaulay, have long since cleared up the mystification, not only about the ecclesiastical relations involved in the Union (which were already disposed of by the fact that England and Scotland, though united, have not the same Church Settlement) but also about the fabulous Guarantee.\* Where, then, should we have been now, if a real settlement had been made in 1800? The prosperity of Ireland must have bounded forward with an elasticity proportioned to the artificial restraints by which it had been kept back. Capital would have been fearlessly invested: wastes would have been reclaimed: the water, not the population, would have been drained from the morass: new sources of industry would have been opened out by which the land would have been relieved while the value of its produce would have been doubled. In wealth, Ireland, with its fertile soil, abundant water-power, countless harbours, and cheap labour, must have become a second England. Hate

\* *The Church Establishment in Ireland, &c.*—pp. 24, 30, 34, 52, 58, 68.



would not, year after year, have sown the giant's teeth; and blind struggles would not have responded to wrong or to neglect. The interminable stream of beggars would not have passed by the "ungiving door," and frozen the charity even of the most humane, as they gazed upon a misery too vast to be relieved. Outrages and secret societies—then, as now, appealed to as a proof that the discontented had no real grievance since they sought an unwise remedy—would not have followed each other in spite of the thunders of the Church, until the great Bishop Doyle, addressing the crowd from the summit of a hill, with the mitre on his head and the crozier in his hand, uttered that last appeal—"My people, you have broken your Bishop's heart!" The declamations of the Orange Lodge would have ceased to excite; the election riot would not so often have been quelled by the fire of musketry; freeholders afflicted with the franchise would not have had to choose between their country and their landlord; and parents invited to send their children to a proselytising school, would not have had to weigh the faith of those children against their bread. How many a misconception would have been removed! How often would the man denounced as a tyrant have known how to carry out his beneficent intentions wisely, and been blest as a protector? How many a hill-side, now barren, would have waved with the golden harvest: how many a cottage, now roofless, would have been radiant with children? Ireland's social state would not then have been a chronicle of recurrent famines, chronic discontent, and an intermittent Habeas Corpus Act. The tithe-war would not then have dragged its ensanguined track along fields besprinkled with a niggard and morose crop, but populous with hovels and ruins; nor would those heroic soldiers who conquered on earth's remotest shores have complained that they had returned to storm the pauper's potato patch, and capture the widow's pig. The antagonism of races would have died away like that of religions: the wars about education and the land-tenure would never have been serious things: the opposite qualities and capabilities of England and Ireland would have proved but supplemental to each other; and between the two countries no more animosity would have existed than between the Protestant part of Prussia and the Catholic Rhine-land. The misrule which prevented all this—the bigotry that took Ireland out of Mr. Pitt's hands—the prejudice, mistaken for piety, which refused Emancipation—the slow, painful reform which would submit to no amputation of abuses, except at an inch each time,—the weakness, more fatal than cruelty, which fevered a nation by half concessions, or fretted it by half constraints,

the good intentions, and irresolute action, and policy without a principle—all these have been dearly expiated. Considered only financially, it would be too little to say that the error has been, and is, paid for by an annual fine of many millions, not counting the military establishments of Ireland. To see these things is but to *see in detail* that industry comes from peace, and peace from justice. The men whose eyes are open recognise this truth, and no longer resemble the half-blind, who see “men like trees walking.” A truth, however great and luminous, tarries beneath the horizon for many a weary watch; but when it rises, though the splendour may wound weak eyes, no necromancy can remand it to the shades.

3. Were it possible for England to forget what it has learned from failures, it would be reminded of the lesson by its triumphs. That lesson is taught not only by prosperous colonies, but by dependencies barbarous no more. It is but seventeen years since we have possessed the Punjaub, and already those who look on its roads, railways, and canals, would suppose it had belonged to civilization for a century. Military hordes have changed into an industrious peasantry—ships push their way up rivers newly made navigable, and on the banks of which are found the mart and the school. Nor is this all. Though formidable no more, we have not allowed it to lose its military population. This fiercest of our foes had been but eight years subjected, when, under the just and wise administration of Sir J. Lawrence, it saved our Indian Empire. Compare this triumph of English wisdom and justice, not clogged by English prejudices, with the hopeless stalemate of the Eastern Despotisms! Turkey stands to her Greek subjects as she stood when the last emperor fell, and the sons of the prophet pulled down the great cross of St. Sophia. She may for the twentieth time put down the revolt of an island: she may, as often as she pleases, beat the ploughshare into the sword:—but the husbandry of the sword is barren. The Punjaub is separated from England by half a world: the Greek race has been in the clutch of Turkey for four centuries; yet they remain separated as though by infinite space. Thus fares it with nations when the policy that first rose out of the ardours of religious hate has petrified into a tradition. A commercial company that could do no better than this would be bankrupt in six months. These things are understood at last:—therefore, it is worth while for Ireland to act with prudence.

4. Time has destroyed the instrumentality by which, as well as the purpose for which the Ascendancy was created. That instrumentality was a proprietor-class, which used to be called

the English garrison in Ireland. But the juster laws of later times have, in many cases with the consent of that garrison, disarmed that garrison. It lives a higher life; and so far as the old life remains, it is now but a "posthumous life." The gentlemen of Ireland, who are inferior to none in spirit, ability, or kindly affections, could not again be made to believe that they had an interest in the degradation of their country. To their order belonged Grattan and Charlemont. From their ranks came many who joined in the great battle for Catholic Emancipation. It was proved long since that no tyrannical legislation could be relied on for keeping the Protestant sons of Ireland banded against the Catholic. In the worst times, wherever genius or patriotism existed, they revolted against the wrong. Wherever there was a generous heart it felt that "from the poor all things come;" and depraved laws often remained futile because the brave man refused to execute them. The peasantry that kept the birth-day feast of the young heir, and brought home the bride, had claims that fanaticism might spurn, but which the kindly and the true respected. Our difficulties are but those of an intermediate position: we must go forward or go back; and there is no class in Ireland which would prefer the rule of force to that of justice. Nor would any government now think of ruling Ireland by corruption. Patronage, moreover, is no longer confined to class or sect; and indirect agencies are restricted to a narrow scope.

5. Time has shewn that Religious Inequality is not available to keep down the religion it was intended to depress. The needful organization of the Irish Catholic Church has made more progress, despite a reduced population, and sufferings witnessed in but one European land, than it did before the famine. Thus in the Arch-diocese of Dublin, since the year 1852, the parochial clergy have increased from 160 to 210; and an Ecclesiastical Seminary has been created, besides numberless other institutions, religious, charitable, reformatory, and educational. A similar progress has been made in other dioceses—certainly in those of Limerick and Kerry, with which I am best acquainted. In the latter £60,000 has been spent on the building of churches within the last ten years. All over the country, cathedrals and churches worthy of the name are rising up;—that of Armagh has been erected at the cost of £60,000. Such an advance is a cause for gratitude to Almighty God, and a pledge of success to conscientious efforts. Men who thus succeed never want for allies. There was a time when statesmen would have looked with jealousy on those signs of improvement. The more thoughtful, as well as the more generous would now probably



be above such a weakness. They have learned that among Catholics the true Catholic is likely to be the true man, and are daily less the prey of such Catholics as once asseverated that it was ungrateful, after the favours already bestowed, to seek emancipation—perhaps that the lack of it had no connection with Irish discontent. The religious progress referred to, has, indeed, rendered this class more rare than in those old days. The Penal Laws were then recent; and the iron had entered into their souls. The same persons would now probably respect their own dignity, and in doing so they could hardly forget that respect for others—their rights, and their true interests—is ever the correlative of a genuine self-respect.

6. Time has proved the absurdity of the allegation that full justice would fall to make Catholics loyal. Canada was a Catholic and a conquered country; but its Church was respected; and the Catholics have been the most loyal part of the population. How is this to be accounted for? Will anyone say that they have had a “watered-down Catholicism,” and a secularized Education? On the contrary, their Education is eminently religious, and among them a Catholic University has lately been established and endowed. Will it be said that though Catholic they were anti-Papal, and hated Roman influences? The contrary would seem to have been the case at the turning point of Canadian history, and the cause of loyalty benefited by the circumstance. “When the Rebellion broke out in Canada, we requested the Pope to exert his authority with the Roman Catholic Priests to induce them to assist us in quelling the insurrection; and his Holiness addressed a Pastoral Letter to them for that purpose, which was attended by the best effects.”\* Such a fact as this will outlive many declamations.

7. An order of things new and unknown lies before Europe, and England is not going either to renounce the world and live in dowager dignity, or to run in the race of nations with the trammels of past errors hanging loose about her feet. Those who regret that the old oppression flourishes no longer as a whole, must yet perceive that—the mast having been blown over—the ship will not right itself till the wreck is cut away. England is strong in prejudices, as in much beside, for a tenacious nature finds it difficult to vary its point of view: but she is less attached to them than to her interests and her good name; and she does not wish to be taunted for ever by foreigners, whether rightly or wrongly, with having either a Poland or a

\* *Past and Present Policy of England to Ireland.*—(p. 326.)

Lombardy on her hands. Permanent discontent is regarded in but one way all over the world, the Government affected by it dissenting alone from the conclusion; and the malcontent country is a "*damnosa hereditas*" to the empire in which it is included. To that empire the country that cannot be dispensed with, and that cannot dispense with its unloved mate, must ever be, so far as political power is concerned, the addition of a minus quantity. The present state of things cannot last long in Ireland—except through some blunder of her own.

8. The events of later times have proved too strong a solvent not only for the passions, but for the theories, that once sanctioned persecution. When the Irish Church was proscribed, and its property alienated, the British crown was not extending toleration to Brahmins and Buddhists, much less protecting their endowments. To use the language now which was used of old would be hypocrisy, not mistaken piety. Neither is there now the temptation to identify loyalty with the old Anglican theory of the Royal Supremacy. The law now acknowledges and endows, in England and Scotland, two Churches, at variance with each other both as to Doctrine and Discipline, one of which does not confess the Royal Supremacy. Even in the Church of England the Sovereign is not now regarded as a mystical person, the representative of the Hebrew monarchy. This theory received its death-wound from the Revolution. The change has been gradual but complete. Ecclesiastical powers, once exercised by the King, fell by degrees into the hands of the minister; another change made that minister mainly the elect of the House of Commons; another made that House cease to be a church-of-England assembly; and another has thrown it open to Jews. Thus it is that Time affects Thought: thus a moral problem becomes insensibly metamorphosed, like the clay model which sometimes shrinks, the change being unobserved only by the sculptor whose eye is ever on it. Bramhall and Taylor may in their day have consistently imagined that the Irish were disloyal because they refused to acknowledge in spirituals that Sovereign for whom in temporals they drew the last sword. But how different would have been the feelings of those high-souled men, if they had lived under present circumstances! They must have either changed their opinions and religious position relatively to Ireland, or else have changed their fundamental principles. Had they continued to disbelieve in the Organic Unity of the Christian Church (although sincerely believing in its Apostolic character and claims), they must yet have longed for the



protecting shield of some Patriarch or permanent council; they must yet have valued any bond of union with Christendom at large, which would have prevented the national tie from meaning but the subjection of the spiritual to the civil power. They would not have branded as disloyalty the allegiance which gave to Ireland that spiritual independence which they must have insisted upon sharing, though, perhaps, in some modified form, as essential to Gospel liberty, and the witness of the Church. The theological war might have continued; but they would have conducted it like scholars and churchmen; and their sympathies would not have been more with sectaries than with what they deemed a branch of Christ's Church. Such considerations are not foreign to the subject. In Ireland these eminent men left no school to represent them, and their sojourn there, barren as it proved of result, affords thus the most conclusive proof that in that country the Ascendency can never mean more than the reproduction and establishment of Puritanism; but in England they have successors whose numbers daily increase, and who, in proportion as the mist clears, will be drawn more and more, alike by religious sympathies, by manly thought, and by ecclesiastical interests, to respect the spiritual rights of Ireland. But will they respect these if informed that the Irish, who, under the shadow of old ruins, so long suffered persecution for the ancient Faith, have, on a matter so penetrated by religious associations, swung round to a modern philosophy? Will they not say—"We were beginning to think that your old opponents might have been the innovators you called them; but what change in the relations of Church and State can be greater than your own change? The true Hebrew mother preferred that her child should be lost to her than that he should be slain;—you, if you can only snatch the Church property of Ireland from a rival's hand, care not that it perishes by your own. In this case to divide would be to preserve; but you insist on destroying."

9. The settlement needed is one the more likely to be made, because it would but follow the precedent of England. The English and Irish *Establishments* have of course a nominal resemblance, and have also technical points of difference; but essentially and practically they are not diverse but opposite in character. The Irish Establishment is the most un-Irish thing in Ireland. In one sense the Church of England, indeed, might also be called an un-English thing; for England is a straightforward country, and yet its Church formularies are—not "broad"—but ambiguous. They were intended to include the chief religious schools in England when they were drawn up. There

existed at that time no Latitudinarian School; the opposed schools were all alike Dogmatic, and "broad" formularies would but have offended all. But there is another side to this matter. Practically considered, the English Establishment is a thoroughly English thing, because it is a compromise for practical purposes. It is not necessary here to discuss any claims connected with Supernatural Privileges or Powers, for we are regarding it simply in a national capacity. If we were to take the statue apart from its lofty pedestal—the nation on which it rests—a criticism as to its character, expression, and material would be a theological dissertation, and with theology we have here no concern. What is that Institution when considered but in its relations with the nation? The one on which the others rest. It binds together the different classes of society; it gives to worship the sanction of law; it sustains the standard of a morality based on Revelation; it is zealous in educational matters, and tolerant to Dissenters; it asserts a dogmatic and diffuses a generalized Christianity; it has associated itself with many a page of modern English history, falling when the monarchy fell, restored with it, and sharing the fortunes of the country; it has ever attracted to itself much of the highest intellect, purest virtue, and most thoughtful patriotism in England; it has produced the best as well as the earliest products of English philosophy and English eloquence; it has taken a great part in English literature, sacred or secular, and has elevated the nation by a corporate as well as individual confession that the nations do not exist for this world alone;—in short, it has represented, for evil and for good, the total English mind, with all its main schools of native or adopted thought; and in this sense it will continue to be a *national* Institute so long as its formularies remain unchanged.

How different a thing has the Irish Establishment ever been! It is the most un-Irish thing in Ireland, and that in the most practical sense. It is the great bar of separation, not only between the two countries, but between the upper and lower nation in Ireland. The Irish Church! A Church consists of clergy and laity;—which of these two has represented Ireland? Few have fancied that the laity conformed at the Reformation; and it has been now finally proved by the accurate researches of Dr. Moran, Dr. Maziere Brady, and Mr. Froude, that of the Bishops ruling the Irish fold at Elizabeth's accession, only one can be shewn to have conformed, and that he was an Englishman, whose orders, however authentic, were derived from Dr. Bonner of London! A reaping hook has been said to retain its identity though it has changed first its

handle, and then its blade. The implement which still reaps the Irish harvest, when it lost the former appendage, failed to keep the latter. Lord Lytton called the "Irish Church" an Irish Bull. It certainly is a misnomer. Men have learned this, and will soon learn that what is an injury to Ireland is an injury to Irish Protestants. "Men in their places are the men that stand." To put a small minority in a position of Ascendency is to develop all its worst qualities, and to suppress many of its best. That Ascendency was a foreign importation; and it has lasted its time. It would be a folly on the part of Catholics now to fear its strength: it would not be unworthy of them to respect its weakness—though not in the sense of condoning its usurpation.

If aught were needed to prove that that Ascendency approaches its term it would be the form its defence has recently taken. Should the arguments once used be reiterated, I shall perhaps endeavour to reply to them; but statesmen seem to have left the case in the hands that undertake desperate cases—those of the polemical lawyer and the political clergyman. What is the plea of the former? It is a string of wonderful statements, made with wonderful confidence, and not, we must hope, without a remembrance that the exuberances of an advocate, like an attorney's bill of costs, are "taxed," as a matter of course. Mr. Whiteside's *defensio ecclesiæ* last session was claimed as a success, and may, therefore, become the type of such defences in future. What, then, says the polemical lawyer?

He boldly denies that Ireland is a Roman Catholic country. He defends the Ascendency by affirming that the Protestants are "industrious, producing something"—and ignores the laws which kept the Catholics behind in the race of prosperity by forbidding them industry, property, trades, professions, and education. He asserts that Irish discontent has been produced by the concessions of the Liberals, and that the Conservatives alone can hold it in check. He accuses the Catholic body of perfidy for demanding Religious Equality, on the ground that fifty years ago several Catholics (they spoke doubtless sincerely) said that if their demand for Emancipation were conceded then—which it was not—they would ask for no more. He affirms that "the abbey lands were the only distinct portions of property which belonged to the Roman Catholic Church at all;" that the creed of the ancient Irish Church was that of the present Establishment; and that Bishop Doyle is reported to have died a Protestant! He says that by the Act of Settlement, in Charles the Second's time, the property of Catholics was



*secured to them* ; and that the reason why the Fenians “do not take the property of the Church is because, as they say, the Church is the only body in the kingdom that has dealt fairly and equitably with tenants.” He demands, “was there ever a nobler or grander policy” than that of the Plantation of Ulster? and vindicates the confiscation as well as depopulation of a province, by asserting that Tyrone had written a letter to Charles the Ninth of France—who had been dead for thirty-four years—promising, if 5,000 Frenchmen landed, “to cut the throats of every man, woman, and child in Ireland !” Finally, he soars into the regions of poetry and prophecy. He states that the Spirits of the gentlemen who made the “Ulster Plantation” are looking down from heaven on the scene of their earthly labours, and would be vexed if the ecclesiastical fruits of them were compromised. He says that 100,000 Protestant emigrants are looking back from Canada on their native shores, and that their feelings about the old Ascendency ought to be respected. He affirms that if the Ascendant Establishment falls, it will be “by the vote of a recreant Senate and an apostate Nation.” It is for that Senate and that Nation to decide whether it likes to have a prophet’s rod whisked about their ears in this shillelagh-like fashion.

Such a speech teaches several useful lessons. Many excellent persons say—“If Ireland is to have a Future she must forget her sad Past.” It brings home to all such that the existing Protestant Ascendency is itself the Past still present, dominant and militant. For the Tories it has a special significance. It is virtually a vindication of the penal laws ; for it raises again the cry of a “foreign allegiance,” which either means nothing, or means that Catholics, as the Pope is their Spiritual Head, are traitors biding their time. When the penal laws were imposed, Tories, non-jurors, and Roman Catholics, were all alike out of favour. There was a war of dynasties, and panic engendered persecution. Those times happily have passed away, and it is now nearly a century since the later Whigs repudiated the principles that proscribed conscience. In Ulster those principles have taken sanctuary. As the Irish beggars have been said to inherit the cast-off rags of the English beggars, so the Orange Tories of Ireland have pushed themselves into the cast-off clothes of the Revolution Whigs. There exists in England a great and highly respectable party, which sometimes calls itself the “country party,” and boasts that it represents the Cavaliers and Loyalists of old times who bled for the altar and the throne. The leader of that party not long ago assured the Catholics that they ought to consider themselves

as its "natural allies." He will do that party a service if he repudiates its unnatural allies.

Such a speech is the *pecca fortiter* of sectarian politics, and carries an animation about it. Others deal in palliations. These arguments of the cushion and handbox order are so tiresome that we should be grateful to one who brings us back to the hardware of parliamentary polemics. He puts on the whole armour of unrighteousness;—but in the modern tournament the lance is sawn half-way through. He cuts capers in tin apparel;—but he has mistaken his century. His speech is a confession that what he defends asks only a long day.\*

It is not necessary to analyse the argument of the political clergyman. The worst advocacy is sometimes, indeed, the best—lying too completely outside the pale of logic to be refuted by logic, and being of a substance too volatile to be weighed in the ordinary scales of judgment and reason. Appeals of this sort in former times often magnetized by their fervour those whom they could not have affected through the understanding. There is one argument of which I can never speak with disrespect—viz., that the Truth is above all, no matter how few may hold it. Of this argument it suffices to say that the Irish people, who for centuries witnessed to their faith in suffering, deem it an argument at their side; and that the statesman who endows many forms of religion does not accept it as available for either side. The rest of the plea includes every topic, from the texts about Antichrist to the allegation that Ireland needs stipendiary country gentlemen. It is the plea of heated men—often eloquent men—who plead both for cherished prejudices and *pro domo suâ*, and who mistake the domination of a sect for the triumph of religion. The answer of the statesman to such task-masters will daily grow more civilly cold. Should it not be such, it will, at a later day, be something like this:—"Is it for you to give counsel? It was you, and your sort that brought us where we stand. You never yet set yourself to any good work or way, or desisted from any officious meddling, or found pastime in aught that did not embroil nations, or permitted peace to your own community or a chance to its creed. You began by undertaking the impossible, and thought it a sin to see that you had failed. Your glebes increased as your country's disasters favoured you. The Ulster plantation opened a Canaan to you; and Cromwell was among your nursing fathers. You added field to field, and house to house, till the beam cried out of the wall against you;—but it was in vain. Of the people, as of the

\* These remarks were originally published soon after the speech referred to was delivered.



harvest, you got but the tithe; and of that human tithe nine-tenths were an importation. The face of the nation is set against you, and against us for your sake. We ask what is to make the empire one; and you answer that your theology is that of St. Patrick, and that your orders come from St. Lawrence O'Toole. You began by decrying a Visible Church, and you end by denouncing all that discover a bar sinister in your coat of arms. You have kept the State long in leading strings; but it was not obsequious to you because it believed in the gules of your celestial heraldry. You have had allies in men stronger than yourselves and as blind, who persuaded us that because they believed in nothing but industrialism, Ireland did not grudge to see her Church in the dirt. Your joint reign is over. Are the destinies of the empire in days like these to be shaped by a generation of materialists ruled by a generation of mystics? If a French fleet were in Bantry Bay, and an American one in Galway Harbour, your talk would be about the Prophet Daniel and Ministers' money, and your materialist allies would propose to embank the Wash! There must be an end of this. Ireland was a fit plaything for you when it was small: it is now dilated to the size of America. Poverty sent her children there; and your Ascendency-policy produced that poverty. It built a city, and decreed that a whole people should dwell in the jungle outside. It maintained barbarism artificially as though it had been an exotic. The Union was passed; and the portent you made stands in the centre of the empire. Open your eyes! There is a panther in the fold, and a lion in the hall!"

Let but statesmen act in time, and they will not need thus to address even the noisiest camp-followers of the Ascendency. If altered circumstances have delivered (as we have seen that they have), the graver, the more learned, the more loyal-hearted, and the more patriotic churchmen of the Establishment from the chains of old maxims, much more are politicians set free. Who now would contend for Protection to prove his consistency? Time has dispelled the illusion. Who in late years would have urged that because England had forced upon America "taxation without representation," she was bound in honour to oppress her later colonies, and lose them in turn? Facts and beliefs have changed, and a policy unchanged would no longer mean what it once meant. No one called the Duke of Wellington inconsistent because he accepted the Reform Bill as a fact:—(happy would it have been if Emancipation had been thus accepted!) and the most conservative of our statesmen need not deem themselves bound to risk an empire for the sake of a politico-religious unity, no longer enforced by Catholic

Austria, France, or Belgium. As for liberal statesmen they are pledged by every good measure they have helped to pass. They are nailed to the cause of justice by a single syllogism. Modern civilization is its major premiss; the condition of Ireland is its minor; and the conclusion follows by necessity.

Reasonably may we believe that such statesmen, if supported by demands from Ireland, resolute, but rational, will not long delay to carry into effect the principles they have often professed. They sometimes say "if we try to set this matter straight, all the fools and fanatics will combine against us." Then the wise men and good had better combine too. The real statesmen of both the great parties should agree to pull together on this one question, which is vital, and strike work if not allowed to do what is needful. The task may prove easier than it seems; for dubious seasons yield golden opportunities; and when the time is come, and a great measure has to be passed, its opponents, by a sort of instinct, shift their ground, and their opposition melts into mist. That statesmen see what lies before them, even their apologies indicate. When they say—"There is a wrong; but it is trivial," we cannot doubt that the political casuist is as well aware as the religious that the doctrine of "venial sins" would be pressed to an immoral extreme if made to sanction *deliberate* sins, even of omission. When they pleasantly remark that if the Protestant clergy possess the National Church Property, the clergy of the nation may boast, on the other hand, the healthy independence of those old days, "when wild in woods the noble savage ran," they cannot suppose the question to be thus concluded. However fortunate it may be that the bark of the State should ride at double anchor while the breakers roar—however felicitous the Statecraft which thus originally combined the "useful" with the exhilarating—it will naturally be asked whether, supposing this dualism to last, the gain might not be enhanced if the rival religious communities were occasionally to alternate the two forms of advantage. Thus to speak is, of course, but to "put the question by" till some more opportune moment, supposed to be near, has arrived.

Why need they hesitate? What is at issue? A whole people is excluded from its place in the Constitution. Who closes its doors against them? Visionaries who cannot see, and pedants who mistake the dust of mouldering pews for antiquity. They, too, talk of the Constitution; but *their* Constitution was but a modern gloss on that which we associate with *Magna Charta* and with Alfred. Let them be satisfied. They cannot reanimate the skeleton. Injustice still sits at the

feast of unreason; but its royal robes have long been plucked off; its very flesh has wasted away; and it sits there "in its bones." All that could be done to hold those bones together has been done. Why plagiarise from the old elegy? Why weep again Lord Eldon's tears? The Constitution which these dreamers are ever brooding over died in 1829—at the window of the old Parliament House, on a July evening, the Orange Banshee shrieked its last shriek. The Orange wake has been dutifully kept up to the last drop of usquebaugh, and the last pinch of snuff. But the old Constitution lives on, and, seated within it, Reason and Religion resume their temperate reign.

A few words more and I have done. In dealing with this Church Question, Ireland must remember that she has before her two questions and two interests. One of these questions relates to her political dignity and her social peace, and is the nearer one: the other relates to the perfection of Religion, and involves considerations more remote, but more sacred. There is no need to sacrifice either of these to the other; but to sacrifice the spiritual to the temporal would be worse than an error. We have to adjust the claims of the present and the future. The Ascendency is an injury to Ireland, and an insult perpetrated in no other land:—as for Ireland's Church, deep as the wrong is, it leaves her future uncompromised. We must not compromise it. To her it matters little whether we advance fast or slowly, provided we advance on the right road. Politicians may be in a hurry; but the Church sees far, and does not share the temptation of those who play "the short game," because their time is short. The chief triumphs of Religion have indeed been ever won by a conquering Endurance; but she bestows her benediction upon Action also, on condition that that action be prudent, and just, and magnanimous.

The action of Ireland must be prudent. Her sons must remember that though the exercise of that virtue involves great self-sacrifice, the neglect of it is, and has ever been, nothing less than the betrayal of Ireland. They must remember that Time fights for their country, and that when Time is at our side the wisest action alone is as fruitful as a "masterly inaction." They must understand the needs of that country in their fulness, and not exaggerate the importance of parts. They must appreciate also the situation of those opposed to them—the errors that were inherited—the ill-will that was misconception—the misconception that rose inevitably, by the law of moral perspective, from a false position. They have to deal with angry men whose



weapons of war have lost their edge, and with good men whose hostility is sometimes an erring form of loyalty. They must bind no foe to his rash statements, and break down no bridge of retreat, much less make concession impossible by saying, "you can satisfy us only by throwing over your old allies in Ireland, and dooming to destruction your most valued Institutions in England." They must remember that in true politics no step recommended by its adroitness chiefly is solidly wise; and that the faults and follies which seldomest escape punishment in this world, and which undergo the severest expiation, are those of the men who stand upon the right side. They must not assume that the Irish Establishment can more easily be deprived of its whole property than of a part;—or forget that an alliance with one political party may be but another name for the renewed or intensified opposition of two.

Her action must be just. Hitherto we have regarded the question exclusively with reference to Catholic interests; but Ireland has Protestant sons also, and he is at heart but sectarian who imagines that in their interests their country has no part. If among those who advocate "the voluntary principle for all" there exist any who are flattered by the thought of that retribution which it would inflict, I will ask them to reflect whether this thought is worthy of a Catholic. However great the wrong of the sixteenth century, none are now responsible for it except those who will listen to no terms of reasonable accord. Ireland demands justice and protection, not revenge. There are wrongs too great for revenge. Such was the wrong inflicted by the Tudor policy on Ireland; and if it were otherwise just to visit on the living the crimes of the dead, *that* crime would leave place for one revenge only—the Christian revenge. But we live in the nineteenth century. To leave men without any religious endowments because they are not entitled to a religious Ascendency would be to imitate the injustice we denounce. They not only are in actual possession of endowments, but have possessed them for several centuries, and in many cases they, or their forefathers, doubtless bought their property on the understanding that religious ministrations should be continued to them. Were they to find themselves deprived of all such aids, the moral loss to them would be in many respects greater than it could ever be to Catholics; and the heart-burnings left behind by this wrong to them, would be a gain to none, could not but forbid that peace to Ireland which Religious Equality effected by just means would secure. "Why then not leave them all they have got?" some will ask. Because this would be to perpetuate the chief of wrongs.

and to cheat Ireland of her primary right. In practical morals contending duties have to be reconciled.

The course that is unjust is also impolitic. The lack of due religious ministrations would probably throw a large part of the higher classes into the ranks either of Dissent on the one hand, or of Unbelief on the other—a plague from which Ireland has hitherto been exempt. In either case Ireland would be a loser. Men who are sincerely religious, however prejudiced, inevitably do much good if they do evil also—good that they had not intended, and do not understand: but benevolence itself, if it has no higher than earthly aims, depresses the moral standard, and materializes those whom it aids. Again, those who have even the shadow of a Church, and the shadow of an affection for it, possess a key to that which has for centuries been the noblest characteristic of Ireland—viz., her devotion to her Church: while the change would render the history and character of Ireland unintelligible to her higher classes, and proportionately diminish their power of serving her. The Ascendency has also separated them from their country. Let us remove it:—but let us not mistake the reverse of wrong for right, or imagine that we shall benefit Ireland by depriving her proprietor class of what to them means spiritual culture. Who among their ranks have hitherto been the best friends of Ireland? Not the petty men with petty minds and large prejudices; but those whose education has been most elevated, and whose piety has smacked least of the conventional. Ours is too great cause for jealousies, and we must rise to its greatness. It is worse to inflict wrong than to suffer wrong:—let not the day that ends the latter inaugurate the former.

An objection of an opposite character remains to be noticed. It is this—“As the Irish Catholic Church has never recognized the unjust alienation of her property, except legally, she could not, supposing the law to be altered, recognize a prescriptive right, however limited, which was based upon that wrong.” But from this objection, supposing it both valid and in point, what would be the inference? If the Church could not sanction the partial alienation of that property from those who had the earlier claim to it, much less could she sanction its total alienation from the ends for which it was primarily intended:—much less could she sanction those “purposes of general utility,” which would impart a share in it to *all*, on condition that a change in its nature had first rendered it illusory to each! The question of prescriptive right need not here be discussed, as the claim of our Protestant fellow-countrymen to a just and generous consideration, exists in entire independence of it. Had we a *tabula rasa* to deal with, a



minority such as we are now treating of, possesses its proportionate rights as well as a majority. Assuming then the inalienability of Church property in the sense of the objector, what follows? If no prescription can constitute a claim against the Church which has suffered wrong, does it therefore constitute none against the State which has done wrong? To meet two claims both of which are imperative, the objector ought to demand, on religious grounds, the restoration of Ireland's church property (so far as it still exists) to Catholic purposes, and also to admit, upon grounds of justice, that for Protestants the State should make adequate provision from other sources. Such a plan I can well understand, though I do not propose it.\*

Lastly, the action of Ireland must be magnanimous. Magnanimity does not claim its "pound of flesh." It does not strain the clearest rights to the utmost; but securing them so far as duty requires that right should be secured, it leaves a place also for that charity which "seeketh not her own." It does not wring opportunity dry, nor forget that retaliation must ever prove but a single link in an endless chain. It remembers that if it be but a beggarly policy to "treat every friend as one who may one day be an enemy," it is a noble one to treat every man who chooses to call himself an enemy as though he might one day be a friend. It remembers that although the just cause remains the just cause after centuries of battle, no contest has ever lasted long without enough of incidental wrong arising upon both sides to inflame even the kindly, and to perplex the clear-sighted. It has no sympathy of course with that compromise which is craft; but so that the essential ends of justice be gained, it likes best the triumph which inflicts no humiliation on others, and prefers the eventual content of a whole nation to that of even its larger part.

Such is the action that best becomes that people which, during three early centuries was the most glorious missionary of the Christian Faith, and for three late centuries its most faithful confessor. The Irish people kept their faith, and that faith kept them a people. What God has joined no man can sunder.

\* In "*The Church Settlement of Ireland*" I have remarked that a second Tithe Rentcharge is a *possible* thing, as well as a divided one; and also, that the State *might*, if it chose, meet the present exigency either by restoring portions of Irish Church property alienated since 1833 (after due compensations), or by replacing them. I have myself suggested a different plan, because it seems unlikely that Church property could now be largely increased, either at the cost of the Irish proprietor, or of the English tax-payer. Such alternative schemes, however, remain for the consideration of those who will not hear of the "just distribution" plan; and, at least, they would not involve the measureless evils of "pensions," or of the "voluntary system for all."

It remains that that faith should put away its reproach, and that that people should recover its right. It remains that what the hand of lawless power snatched from Ireland should be restored to Ireland—not that the ancient Church Polity of Ireland should be reformed after the colonial type. Ireland is an ancient country, and its future must be in harmony with its past. It is not for her to sacrifice her Traditions, or to walk in the footsteps of foreign Revolutionists. The Faith of Ireland is her Cause; and if aught that belongs to her Church ever takes in her estimation but a secondary place, or remodels itself to suit some exigency of the hour, the Ireland of history is at an end. Again, as in the days of her noblest and most successful struggle—that for Catholic Emancipation—she seeks her right, and she seeks the right of her Church, and again she finds them united. Her cause is a holy cause, not by choice only but by necessity, and a divine decree; and as the High Priest of old, when he entered into the Holy of Holies, bore upon his breast those twelve jewels which witnessed to the twelve Tribes of Israel, so now, with a converse fitness and an equal duty, a religious and just people, advancing towards the gates of its new and higher destinies, must bear upon its breast that cause which is the cause of God. May it bear that cause to victory.

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## II.

PUBLIC opinion in England is rapidly arriving at the conviction that a just settlement of the Church question in Ireland is the necessary pre-condition of peace, and, therefore, of progress in that country. In a recent pamphlet I have endeavoured to confirm that conviction. Nothing solid, however, can be effected until the public opinion of Ireland concurs with that of England in the adoption of some specific plan of Church Reform which shall approve itself to both countries alike as honorable, reasonable, and practicable. Such a plan would be the fair distribution of Ireland's Church property between her Catholic and her Protestant children; the Catholic portion being administered, for defined religious purposes, by a Catholic Board, and the Protestant portion by a Protestant Board, so that no place could remain for jealousies relative to Governmental influence. Many persons in Ireland prefer the secularization of the Church

property. It is to the consideration of that alternative that the following remarks are chiefly addressed.

The secularization of that property seems to me demonstrably its destruction. It would be the voluntary relinquishment, at the close of a long and heroic struggle, of that high consummation which centuries of religious fidelity have merited for Ireland. I cannot see why a people should finally lose its church property because it has clung to its church. I cannot doubt that, in many cases, the preference for that course is founded on misconception. The just distribution of Ireland's church property, simple as the proposal may seem, is one which in late years has been little heard of; and, as a consequence, any scheme that does not exclude all endowment is often confounded with one which would confer state pensions on the Catholic clergy. In opposition to pensions all Irish Catholics are agreed. They unanimously affirm that Ireland requires Religious Equality, and that pensions for her clergy would not be Religious Equality. For many years I have asserted these two propositions, and urged that the church question, which has too long been neglected, should be vindicated, for till it is settled Ireland will never have peace. Religious endowments form a part of that question. Those who do not thoroughly know Ireland, although they entirely desire her welfare, often confound the different sorts of possible endowments, and recommend the plan of pensions out of the general revenue, in the wish to avoid Irish jealousies, and to place the burthen mainly on the wealthier country. Once rightly informed respecting our needs and our wishes, they cannot but be far better contented to fix upon the ancient and national resources of Ireland the maintenance of her clergy. This course was zealously recommended in preference to pensions by many\* eminent English statesmen during the debates on the celebrated "Appropriation Clause," and on other occasions, between 1832 and 1845, though at earlier periods pensions were spoken of. To refuse such a course now would be to confess that the object now aimed at was, not justice to the religion of Ireland, but the corruption of her clergy. Of this there can be no thought. Craft is not now mistaken for wisdom; and men of sense know that the loss falls upon all when the pastors of a people lose their moral influence. Let us impute no unworthy motives, for a suspicious habit is as mischievous as credulity, and commonly alternates with it, but show all true friends of justice that more excellent way by which they can serve her.

\* See "*The Church Establishment of Ireland*," &c.



Are we, then, to seek Religious Equality by the alienation of all church property from church purposes, or by a just apportionment of that property between Catholics and Protestants? I maintain the latter proposition. Before entering on this question there are two things to be premised in order to avoid misconception.

1st.—To prefer the just apportionment of church property to its alienation from religious uses by no means implies that the question of endowments is the first question to be settled. Till we have peace on the education question we should probably not meet this other one with the right temper on either side. It is obvious, too, that the Catholic Church could not approach it while her hands are still bound by laws, whether enforced or not, which prohibit her normal constitution. But to see our way aright, we must, from the beginning, know at what end we have to aim. We have also a public opinion to form.

2nd.—Those who demand that the Irish Church should cease to be disinherited maintain no narrow dogmatism with regard to the religious uses to which the restored property should be applied. Past events have left us burthened with many needs, and our share of the church property would probably not suffice for them all. It might, for some years at least, be applied mainly to assistance, given proportionately to local efforts, in the building of churches and presbyteries, reformatories, penitentiaries, ecclesiastical seminaries, the maintenance of cathedrals, orphanages, and other charitable asylums, under distinctly religious superintendence, as well as to the purchase of glebes—unless another provision should be made for that purpose. A vast reserve fund has for some thirty years been thus used for the general wants of the Established Church. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners report that, in twenty-eight years, from 1834 to 1862, they received £3,310,999, or on an average £118,250 per annum, and spent it upon Protestant purposes analogous to those I have named. By the time our more urgent needs were supplied it would become a question whether the Church property restored to Catholics should or should not be made the support of their clergy, and in what proportions.

It is, perhaps, for want of attention to this distinction that the authority of several eminent prelates has been confidently claimed for or against some proposition which was not, in fact, discussed by them. It is hardly respectful to those venerable persons to stretch any statement of theirs beyond what is included strictly within it. They have said that the Catholic clergy will never become the stipendiaries of the State, no matter how fair



may be the intentions of an existing government, or how strong it may seem to sustain its good intentions despite the vicissitudes of public opinion, and such luckless misconceptions as have been witnessed within the last twenty years. Such statements coming from such high and responsible authorities, will have a grave significance with thoughtful persons. They are practically conclusive as regards "the voluntary principle for all," when that principle stands contrasted either with the present ecclesiastical settlement, or with pensions. They do not, however, justify us in assuming that the opinions of those eminent prelates must be the same as our own upon matters on which they have expressed none, much less in attributing to them a desire of so legislating, as regards Church property, during a crisis full of anomalies, as to tie up the hands of their successors for ever. It is enough that the sixteenth century should blindfold and fetter the nineteenth:—let not the nineteenth fetter the twentieth. If we keep strictly to the real point at issue, we may find that we differ less than we think.

Now to the question. Those who affirm that we should aim at "the voluntary principle for all" would apply the Church property to purposes of "general utility." I think this an illusion. What are those purposes? It is commonly answered—The relief of the poor and the education of the people. Let us think twice. At present the poor are relieved by the poor rate. The landlord pays one half of that rate directly, and, on the long run, he pays the other half of it indirectly. A known charge on the land must be taken into account by the tenants who compete for the land. The rent they can actually pay (whatever they may promise to pay) is the sum that remains over to them after providing labour, supporting their families, replacing capital and meeting certain charges on the land, such as poor rates and county rates. Reduce those charges and you eventually benefit the landlord, just as if you had relieved his estate of its superfluous water. Extreme competition may induce tenants to offer too high rents; but the same competition would raise rents higher still, if reduced charges on the land enabled the tenants to pay more, without more exertion or more sacrifice. It is not, then, the poor who would gain by the proposed gift. Eventually they would lose grievously by it. Suppose a fund, equal to our present average poor rate, called into existence by a benevolent magician, for the relief of the poor. It would, of course, be drawn on before a rate was raised. For a moment, the landlord and occupier would be *relieved*, the poor getting *their* usual relief from the new source. But the new fund for the poor, having no relation either with that land *from* which, or that industry *by*

which the poor live, would prove but a snare. To keep down rates would no longer be among the motives for employing the poor in that remunerative labour, which adds to the produce of the land. High rents might be found compatible with a low but cheap form of culture; but with a diminished labour and produce, the land would be less and less able to support a happy, numerous, and industrious poor. Nor is this all. The new relief fund, including no salutary restraints as regards the administration of it, would be jobbed away, or would be still worse spent, not in the relief of the poor, but in the creation of pauperism. That fund exhausted, we should have to build up once more our present poor law system; *but we should have first destroyed its moral foundation.* A transference of property is always really but insensibly going on between class and class, to the common good of all. Those who with an arbitrary benevolence would take that transfer into their own hands, and constitute themselves a nation's providence, soon find themselves in collision with social laws which will no more be trifled with than the laws of nature. On a notable suggestion made to meet a time of distress in England, Mr. Burke remarked thus:—"The squires of Norfolk had dined when they gave it as their opinion that the rate of wages ought to rise or fall with the market of provisions." The poor may or may not be adequately relieved at present, but the source from which their relief is drawn does not lack depth, and is the only source from which *legal* alms could be drawn without doing great mischief, moral and social.

So again with national education. How is it supported at present? By general taxation. But England, as the richer country, pays about ten times as much of that taxation as Ireland—in other words, pays nine-tenths of what our national education costs—while we pay a small portion of what hers costs. Therefore, here also the proposed gain would be illusory. Let us open our eyes. The State took away the ecclesiastical endowments of Ireland from the nation at large some three centuries ago—merged a large portion of it in the mass of individual proprietorship—and appropriates what remains to the religious ministrations of a small, but comparatively wealthy minority, including the proprietor class. Ireland consults as to the remedy. She is advised to demand that the remaining portion of her national Church property—for it is hers—should be divided between the landlords and England!

"But," it said, "we need other things, such as middle-class schools, University endowments, &c." No doubt:—but our Protestant fellow-countrymen possess these things over and

above their ecclesiastical endowments; and a complete *civil* equality, to go no further than this, would require that we should possess them no less. The University of Dublin has some 200,000 acres, unfortunately let at an utterly inadequate rent; while the endowed and other schools are said to hold possessions worth £70,000 per annum, much of which is also not realised. If this property cannot, without wrong to testators, or to the present possessors, be rendered available in an equal degree for Catholic and Protestant education, the State is bound to do what is needful for a majority as completely as she does it for a minority.

It is now many years since Sir Thomas Wyse first affirmed, both in his speeches and writings, that justice would not be satisfied, as regards University Education, until the State had adopted one of two courses, *i.e.*, had either thrown open the Dublin University on exactly equal terms to Catholics and Protestants; or else had *founded, chartered, and endowed* a second University for Catholics, in which they should hold a position as advantageous, in all respects, as Protestants hold in the Dublin University. This conviction, as he stated to me at Athens, a week or two before his death, he never ceased to hold. To exonerate the State from such duties, by substituting the present religious for the present educational endowments of Ireland, would obviously be but an indirect way of destroying the former. This truth once established, and this loss guarded against, there is another truth, subordinate but important, to which we should also attend. Education *includes* a religious as well as a secular element. Supposing the educational system of Ireland to be completed, that system might be one founded on a principle of perfect equality, and providing for the middle and higher classes as well as for the lower; and yet it might, by necessity, fail to meet various religious needs. To supply such religious deficiencies, and to supplement such Educational Institutes, the funds at the disposal of the Catholic and Protestant Boards would be available. Parliament would thus be spared its annual Maynooth debate; and the education both of the clergy and the laity, would receive aid wherever aid was wanted. But though religion should be the animating principle of education, yet the main process of education is secular; consequently the main fund for its support should be one existing over and above the church property. Such it is in England; and such it should be in Ireland.

Once more—it has been said that the church property might be turned into a loan fund for the subsidizing of industrial enterprises. For agricultural improvements the State already



lends money on the easiest terms; and it is obviously her interest to give aid wherever she reasonably can. From other sources funds can usually be procured for seasonable undertakings, when the wisdom and the co-operation needful for such undertakings exist: and an artificial stimulus, half arbitrary, half charitable, wholly unbusiness-like, and lacking the usual motives of prudence, would be more likely to lead industry astray than to do it a solid good. In short, there is no escaping the dilemma. There exists, and can exist, no purpose of "general utility" to which the church property could be applied, except in appearance. Take from God's altar what was given to the altar, and whoever may snatch the spoil it will be torn from the *Pauperes Christi*.

"Purposes of general utility!" The phrase is familiar, and modern history tells us what it means. It has commonly been most heard when national piety was waning, sciolism waxing, and bankruptcy impending. What is new is that Catholics should join the cry. Was it for this that we condemned certain modern Italian statesmen, and the infidel sages that heralded the first French revolution? Was the wisdom of Catholic times—was the precedent of the Ancient Law a dream; and was the Church to learn first from the "new light" which has dawned upon the modern academies and the manufacturing districts, the sound, philosophic, and religious way of sustaining her sacred ministrations? I know that, of old, Irish church property included, beside its primary purposes, the relief of the poor and education. This is true in Dr. Doyle's sense, but it is relevant no longer. Observe the distinction. Dr. Doyle found tithes so appropriated as to be useless to the Irish people, and so levied as to produce misery and crime; but his eyes looked round in vain and found, though long searching, no provision for the poor, and none for education. Since he wrote, church lands, for which no one could then find a use, have been in part "got rid of;" and church property to the value of nearly half what remains has been alienated from religious purposes by a well-meant but patch-work legislation, which rested on no principle. But since he wrote, better things than these have also been done. What remains of Irish Church property is a fragment; but that mighty and beneficent law of compensation which heals the wounds of nations, compelled the State to replace with one hand a part of what she had snatched away in past times with the other. Therefore it is that we have now a fund for the relief of the poor, and one for education, the latter of which the State ought to increase, and will increase. What! is she to be informed that she may shirk all such duties by alienating the remainder of



Church property from its primary, and applying it to secondary and secular purposes? Is this the counsel of Catholics to the State? Are we to burn our paternal mansion because the goods of a rival are stored in it?

Far from the large heart and clear intelligence of Dr. Doyle would have been any such counsel in times like these. Fidelity to great men (and he was great) means fidelity to the spirit in which, and the principles according to which they acted, not the clumsy homage of an obsequiousness, servile and unreasoning—such as has so often changed great names into great evils. “The letter killeth.” In the application of great principles, men have to take changed circumstance into account—to adapt and to transpose. Reasons have always abounded since the sixteenth century for that confiscation of Church property, which in the nineteenth shields itself under the Christian name of Secularization. The same end is reached whether we use the language of men or that of the gods, and commonly the same motives lead to it. The State Esurient hungers for Church spoil. Prodigality and ruin have been the statesman’s general incentives to Church spoliation; but it so happens that the State has never been the richer for its prey. A cry is raised on these occasions that too much land is in the hands of a corporation: yet no one adds, “restore, therefore, by sale, a part of this land to general circulation, but apply its value to the uses originally intended.” Church property may easily be too vast; but what Ireland retains is but a remnant. We need not discuss the abstract question of right; for those who insist most strongly on the rights of the State must admit that it may do a wrong even while acting in the sphere of its rights. It has been the custom of the Church to endure that wrong patiently, but not to court it. It would ill become Irish Catholics to establish a new precedent in this matter—nay, to force confiscation upon a Protestant State which is wholly indisposed to such violence. God’s Providence can of course change, and has often changed, loss to gain;—but then the loss must have been honestly come by.

There is a wisdom which befits modern sects and parties, but is not ours; and we should do ill to plagiarise from them. “Voluntaryism,” as it is called, was not adopted by us as a principle; it was our necessity; and though, as in the case of persecution itself, a people that had suffered, not done, the wrong extracted good out of evil, it would be enthusiasm to proclaim that such good is the highest good or the only good. Our past denies this, and the whole genius of our faith confutes it. It was a noble thought, and worthy of Catholic times, when a

nation devoted a property to God. God kept that property for the nation! Great hearts could trust great hearts; and each generation knew that the next would ratify the gift and partake the merit. The policy was tender—it provided a spring for every thirsty lip, and willed that the ministrations of grace should surround us like nature's light and air. It was magnanimous—it gave much that it might receive much; and it could pardon somewhat. It was profound—it provided for the clergy a support in one sense fixed—and thereby it secured their independence—in another sense fluctuating, and thereby it bound up both their sympathies and their interests with those of the people. It was impartial—it neither placed the pastors in dependence on the Government, nor assumed that the normal relation between the Church and State must be one of hate and war. It had this one fault—that it tended to enrich a church too much in the course of ages, thereby enfeebling her within. From us the chance of this solitary evil is removed by the devastations of past times. Above all, the ancient system was provident. It took thought for intervals of famine and war, of bewildered fancy, or political confusion. It provided even for what it did not foresee—the condition of a Christian country which has lost unity of faith. Some of the modern State-scholastics assure us that a State may not divide religious endowments because it has a conscience! It is because it preserves a conscience, even when it has lost unity of faith, that it may and must do this. A State knows just as much about Revealed Truth as the Nation which it impersonates knows, and no more. If it confesses a unity of faith which is desirable, but non-existent, it confesses a falsehood. If it confesses that a Nation which has lost unity of faith still retains Christianity, and honours it so far as it may, it confesses the truth. There is a higher truth which it aspires to confess at some future day; and for this remoter duty the principle of endowments preserved, but justly apportioned, makes the only possible provision. Let me explain. I know that what I say may be perverted, but it will not be perverted by men of sense and honour. Most persons hope that truth will one day prevail by its own inherent strength, and prevail the sooner in proportion as passions allayed leave it a clear field. Thus, our Protestant friends think that what they deem truth will one day prevail all over Ireland. If it does, the religious endowments, though divided, will be wholly Protestant again, and that without injury to any man, but with the applause of all. Have Catholics no corresponding hope? If they have, and if it should be realized, no matter at how distant a day, is the Church to be told at that day that not a

fragment of her own may be her own, because what a past form of religion had respected, even while misappropriating it, that the hands of her own sons had destroyed completely and for ever? There is a voice more potent than mine which protests against the wrong. It is the voice that comes from ruined abbeys and desecrated shrines, and that demands whether the work of ruin has not gone far enough, and whether the passions have not had their day.

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### III.

It has been so commonly assumed that if the Irish Ecclesiastical Settlement be reformed, the alternative must lie between "pensions for the Catholic clergy," or "the voluntary system for all," that the real remedy, viz., a right distribution of Church property, has hardly been considered. That measure is by some regarded as analogous to pensions even if not identical with them. But nothing can be more erroneous than this view. To receive back a portion of our own property is generally accounted a thing wholly different from seeing a rival dispossessed of it; and in this case, the restoration of our own, so far as the religious and social needs of our fellow-countrymen permit, is the opposite of receiving pensions, both in principle and tendency. It may be our best protection against them. I have heard it said, whether with truth I know not, that if pensions had been placed unconditionally at the disposition of the clergy during the famine years, they would have been obliged in some parts of the country to accept them for the sake of their starving flocks. Let the Irish Church have her share of the Irish Church property, and no future calamity can ever expose her to the trial of so difficult a choice. I have endeavoured to dispel the misconception which assumes that if a just proportion of the Church property be restored to us, it must, therefore, be applied in such a manner as to weaken the ties that bind together the clergy and the people. We are in a transition state; what would be injurious now may be useful at a future time; and what would be noxious under ordinary, may prove serviceable under extraordinary circumstances. In the meantime, a church property is not by necessity a clerical fund, and there exist other most important purposes which would be carried into effect by the aid of our national church property, applied, not as a

substitute for individual munificence, which has already produced such wonderful results, but in proportion to local contributions. But, above all, I have endeavoured to remove the illusion that Ireland's Church property could be separated from religious uses, and yet retained for the Irish people. Before leaving this subject I may illustrate it once more by the authority of a statesman and of a prelate—the one English, the other Irish, but both on this matter agreed. Lord Russell expressed himself thus in 1844:—"In Ireland about half a million of money will arise from accumulations of the Perpetuity Fund, available at any time for Ecclesiastical purposes. There are also the Acts passed some years ago for the abolition of the Vestry Cess, and for regulating the purchase of Church leases; if you add to these the deduction of 25 per cent. on tithes, you will find that the Church has lost £300,000 per annum since 1830. Now, how has this money been applied? Has it been given for the spiritual instruction or general education of the people? No! It has all gone, *in fact, if not in form*, into the pocket of the Protestant landlords." Dr. Ryan, the late venerable Bishop of Limerick, wrote thus to a friend in 1848:—"Any new appropriation of Church property to any *but Ecclesiastical purposes*, would be liable to the objection that such arrangement would be, in some shape, in favour of interests that had no right to derive benefit from such sources. The only new distribution of this property, therefore, that would be likely to give anything like general and *permanent* satisfaction would be a fair allocation of it between the different religious denominations in this country." The Bishop then proceeded to remark that no statesman, desirous of carrying into effect this great scheme of justice and peace, could ever propose any interference of the Government with the discipline of the Catholic Church, except at the cost of creating bitter opposition to the measure, and that without the slightest chance of advantage to the State.

But objections are made to our receiving back our own. Some relate to Ireland; some to the supposed state of English parties. Let us begin with the former class.

It is objected, first, that what we should have is—glebes. Of course glebes differ essentially from pensions. They differ from my proposition also, and in this respect, that they are included in it, and that their value could probably amount to no more than a tenth part of what justice awards us. Let us have our rights, or let the wrong remain as it is—plain and unvarnished. "Religious Equality" would be a final, because a just, settlement; and for less than this it is not worth while to disturb the country. Against large farms in the hands of the clergy the



Synod of Thurles and their own good sense has pronounced. Residences for them *adjoining their churches* would be, indeed, a most important benefit; but these we could even now create for ourselves with a slight extension of that law which enables proprietors to give sites for churches and schoolhouses. Glebes would, as a matter of course, be a part of any real settlement of the Church question. "Religious Equality" includes a just distribution of *all* Church property. The tithe rentcharge is much the largest part of it; and if to Catholics there should be assigned more than their proper share of that portion, and less than their proper share of other portions (as might be found convenient), in that case we should probably apply a part of the property thus made ours to the purchase of glebes and building of presbyteries. Should we, on the other hand, receive our proper share of the tithe rentcharge, it would be the duty of the State to provide glebes for Catholics, as it has provided them for Protestants. Till then, let us leave this well-meant evasion of the difficulty to others. The plan of glebes has sometimes been recommended by Protestant proprietors—I have no doubt upright advisers—who acknowledged that it was a monstrous anomaly, and a crying injustice, that the clergy of the great majority of the people should be without legally secured property, but who insisted that the church property must not be meddled with, while they admitted also that the Catholic clergy would not accept a stipend from the State. Glebes—and thus the debt would be paid! The clergy of Catholic Ireland would receive a provision equal to a small fractional part of what is now appropriated by the clergy of little more than a ninth of the total population! In these "benevolences" one recognises the arithmetic of the Ascendency.

It is alleged that if the Irish Church had endowments it would be at the cost of a diminished liberty. Here again we meet the confusion between pensions and the ancient national Church property. The former are not to be thought of; but the ablest English statesmen who have wished for Catholic endowment in either form have seen and denounced the folly of making such endowments for the sake of an unworthy *quid pro quo*. It is but the prejudiced among them who fail to know that among good Catholics loyalty to the Sovereign is a natural growth, but that they owe to the Church also a loyalty which forbids them to subject it to Government. Thus an eminent writer remarks—"The Catholics, it is said, have no right to claim any public endowment, because they will submit to no control on the part of the Government which bestows it. They have, in the first place, acknowledged that the State has a right

to require ample security for the loyalty and good conduct of all who eat its bread ; and more than that it would be unnecessary, as well as imprudent for the State to demand."

"Innumerable jealousies and difficulties would grow out of any interference of ours ; and if we set about the accomplishment of a great measure of peace and improvement, it would be the height of folly not to do it in the manner most likely to produce a satisfactory and effectual result. With what consistency could a Protestant Government insist upon any right of patronage, or mix itself up in any way with purely ecclesiastical Catholic concerns?"\* In Catholic Belgium the State leaves the Church free ; in our Colonies the Anglican communities advance towards freedom : and every day it becomes more recognised in free countries that the sole true service the State can receive from a church, is that highest service which a free church alone can render, viz., the creation of those religious and moral convictions which supply a basis to political order. The time of State control passes away with that of persecuted sects, and arbitrary Ascendancies ; and men learn daily that the State which dishonors religion is guilty of *felo de se*.

Again, there are persons who say that it is unworthy of the Irish Catholic Church to "receive endowments from the State." If this objection means that the Irish Church is never to receive back again, with the sanction of law, any part of that property of which law deprived her—in other words, that she is bound in honour to remain for ever disinherited—it is difficult to confute what is so fantastic. The assertion is sometimes enforced by reasons worse than fantastic. If—no question being raised as to the *special* religious application of the restored property—we are informed that neither now nor at any future time, could the people of Ireland trust the clergy of Ireland with any portion of the church property of Ireland, I demand against whom is the scandalous aspersion hurled?—against the clergy or against the people? Does the charge come from Exeter Hall, or from the Fenian Conventicle, or whence? If I must examine what I shrink from touching, let me ask a question. Assuming church property to be dangerous, pensions, of course, must be ten times as dangerous. Supposing all endowment a snare, even to mature priests labouring in a land the annals of which are a part of Church history, the snare must plainly be most fatal in the case of students whose minds are still plastic, and of professors who shape the theological science of Ireland. What, then, of Maynooth? It has endowments, and its endowments consist of

\* "Past and Present Policy of England towards Ireland," p. 303.

pensions. Logically Mr. Spooner was right ; and he will always have successors. How can the State disinherit the clergy of a nation, except on the principle that it is sinful to endow error ? In that case, how can it endow the very fountain and source of erroneous teaching ? Maynooth may be a small thing ; and we have heard of the fair but frail defendant who urged, in answer to the indignant justices, the plea, that her child was a remarkably *small* child. I do not know that orthodox statesmen have any better plea to urge, while their conscience forces them to disinherit a nation, and a stern necessity compels them to endow that small but formidable thing, its Ecclesiastical Seminary. But logic is impartial and implacable—it turns as keen an edge upon us as upon them. Catholics who do not object to Maynooth must not denounce all religious endowments.

Once more. Some persons imagined, and very naturally, that when the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill passed, the Maynooth Grant would be repudiated by Catholics. It had ever been provisional ; and it seemed inconsistent with a new penal law. But our prelates, doubtless, foresaw that a State, acting under misconception, would return to that royal road of justice and wisdom along which it had been advancing for a quarter of a century. The Maynooth Grant has not been repudiated ; but, on the contrary, since then, as well as before, we have sought and gained endowments, nay, even in the form of pensions, for other classes of our clergy. We have workhouse chaplains, dependent on the guardians ; and prison chaplains, dependent on Government ; we have chaplains in the army ; we have navy chaplains in harbours, and we ought to have them in ships. How is this justified ? On the ground, perhaps, that these chaplains incidentally do service to the State as well as to the flocks ? What ! Are we, then, prepared to admit that no service is incidentally rendered to the State by a parochial clergy, whose moral influence alone maintains the order of society ? I, at least, can make no such admission. In a book, published before I was a Catholic, I spoke of the Catholic clergy as “the chief barrier which exists between us and anarchy,” and I have never changed that opinion. But, perhaps, it will be said, that these chaplaincies are exceptional ? No doubt they are ; and no one wants to assimilate to them the condition of the parochial clergy, for pensions are out of the question. A further enquiry however remains—“are there no other exceptions ?” What of those vast parishes in the West, in which a single priest starves, and the flock suffers with the shepherd ? There are limits to the exertions of the most devoted



clergy; and there are consequences from the lack of needful ministrations. On these depend, not merely a high moral and religious standard, but the very foundations of virtue, and a knowledge of those "things necessary to be known by all Christians." A mode of support which in our rich plains and large cities, is "voluntary," may in the moorlands be both involuntary and insufficient. There are districts where even a wealthy establishment procures aid from the Church Commissioners, and also from numberless societies, English and Irish, most of them bent on proselytising enterprize, and, in all, possessing, as is stated, funds amounting to £80,000 per annum. When the outcasts of our wastes look up to us for succour in their extremity, are we to answer them that a noble property was set apart for their spiritual needs by the nation, but that not a fragment of it may now be so applied, whether for the building of churches, or schools, or parochial residences, or for the most occasional aid in adding to the number of their curates, because that property was alienated centuries ago, by a disloyal State, and because it is complimented away, or talked away, now by patriotic rhetoricians, who declare that, though Ireland will not longer endure the existence of Protestant endowments, she is herself too exalted to desire "a penny of Church property!" Was there ever such barren and unpractical declamation? What we do not want is to injure our neighbour. What we do want is to vindicate once more for the people of Ireland that sacred reserve dedicated to religion and civilization, and to devote it to its ancient and reasonable purposes. If we shrink from this duty, we are responsible for the consequences of spiritual destitution.

When wandering among the wildernesses of the West I have often wondered how any Protestant clergyman, resident there, who remembers the "Four Last Things," can find rest in his bed and reflect on the condition of the population around him, bearing in mind also that all Connaught contains but some 40,000 members of the Established Church. He looks round upon his children, and forecasts their destinies. It is well; but let him remember that there is not a hair on their heads which does not derive its nourishment from the labour of those stalwart arms that dig his glebe and house his corn—and that the poor have children as well as the rich. Nor have I marvelled less, how any gentleman, and, especially, any Catholic gentleman, can deem it compatible with the truth and gentleness which belong to his order, to look upon these things and be silent. Have they, or have they not, consequences that affect our national happiness and honour—nay, consequences that reach through eternity? Our clergy have lately told us

something about the prisons, and quays of Liverpool. The forlornest of those who tread the latter trod once the fair and spotless fields of Ireland. Not even to meet such cases do I recommend pensions. But if we should reject our share in that religious property which does not belong exclusively to wealthy Protestants, who can read religious books before their fires, and who speak with scant respect of ecclesiastical ministrations, but which is the forfeited inheritance of the Irish people, and pre-eminently of those outcasts, I think that a voice from lonely wastes where they were born, from desolated villages whence they fled for their lives, from regions acquainted with many famines, where churches are occasional and temptation is universal, and lastly from streets where sin not "voluntary" results from inevitable ignorance and despair, will ask us why.

Let me now assign a few reasons for seeking the just distribution, not the destruction, of Church property.

I. It is necessary. If Religious Equality is a sacred principle, it is also a principle that we are not to substitute illusions for realities, or *wantonly* to injure existing interests. But it has been shown that to secularise Church property—whoever might snatch the wreckers' spoil—would give the nation nothing but what it either possessed already, or must soon gain, since the Protestant part of the nation possesses it over and above its Church property. It is necessary, therefore, either to abandon the principle of "Religious Equality," or to realize it in the only way compatible with other principles not less sacred.

II. It is common sense. We have all along complained of a grievance, and this course would remove it. That grievance was the alienation of the church property. It never consisted in that arrangement which has been changed—the arrangement which imposed the payment of tithe especially on the *tenant*. That was, indeed, the most vexatious way in which tithe could be collected, and being unsuited to modern times, no one would restore it; but, as Protestants assured us in old times, it is the *land* that really pays the tithe, whether the landlord or the tenant acts instrumentally as the agent in this transaction. Thus, the present Lord Grey said, in 1835—"It was idle to conceal from themselves what was the real grievance of the Irish Church. It was not that tithes were collected; it could not, therefore, be gotten rid of by a transference of payment of tithes from the tenant to the landlord. \* \* \* The people of Ireland were groaning under this grievance—namely, that property intended for the most important and useful purposes *for the benefit of all*, was now applied in a manner useful to none,

but injurious." When a statesman has asked me, "Is there any one thing remaining which we could do for the Irish people and which we have not done?" I have sometimes answered, "If you could only, without inconvenience, take your hand out of their pocket!" To keep from a man his own, and thus force upon him a large expenditure otherwise not necessary, is to plunder him. Common sense requires, and indeed common justice no less, that we should seek a remedy for wrong, through the reversal of that wrong, not through a course which perpetuates the injury, while extending it to others. Distribute church property aright, and you cancel the wrong. The present, which so much puzzles statesmen in dealing with Ireland, would thus shake off the "Original Sin" of the past. We are told it is our duty to forget past wrong. We know that to do so is not more our duty than our interest; but how can we forget a Past which stands before our eyes, colossal and domineering in the largest institution of the Present? When the wrong is removed, the past will in Ireland, as in Scotland, either be forgotten, or be remembered without bitterness as part of a nation's historical lore. Till then it is the interpreter of our daily life, and part of our *cause*. We remember the Past that we may have a Future.

III. It is the religious course. It restores to the glory of God and the good of His poor that which was diverted from both, sacrilegiously and iniquitously, by that disastrous intelligence of which the seat is in the passions. It cancels the bond between patriotism and revenge, and elevates religion to her native seats unvexed by the tempest. It brings the "daily bread" of sacred ministrations and spiritual instruction to the outcast and the wayfarer; and it fortifies the emigrant, or the exile, with that matured and thoughtful *personal* piety which can alone guard him against the temptations of far lands in which truth is not a tradition, nor virtue a social usage, and in which neighbours are not "our outward consciences." It roots among us that charity without which faith is dead. Unlike "the voluntary system for all," it knits together, by a common weal, those different classes and interests in Ireland which have been too long at war, and which never will be frozen together (whatever revolutionists may vainly hope) by the common woe of a loss sustained in equality. It gives us social peace; and, till a basis is laid for peace, who can tell what calamity may not be in store for us? Some people flatter themselves that in the event of a great catastrophe it is not Ireland that would suffer most. Catastrophes are

\* "The Church Establishment in Ireland, illustrated exclusively by Protestant Authorities." Warren, Dublin.



possible from which, if England lost most because she had most to lose, Ireland would lose most because she would lose her all. If to inflame popular passions be a thing unworthy, immoral, and irreligious, he is guilty not less of an omission unworthy, immoral, and against religion, who is deterred by sloth, or by a timidity mistaken for prudence, from reforming by practicable means, and in time, that state of things which must otherwise remain the chronic cause of national discontent.

IV. It is our duty to the poor. The Church property set apart for the nation belongs primarily to the poor, and to the poorest of the poor—to those who, with the will, have not the means of providing religious ministrations, or have never learned their worth. It is a common mistake to think that Church property belongs only to the clergy; or rather, this has been the specious assumption of revolutionary statesmen, who wished to deprive of protection a property which they intended to confiscate. It belongs to the clergy (viewing the question from its political and ethical side) *per accidens*, but it belongs essentially to the poor. The people must always need religious ministrations, and, whether in one way or another, their clergy must always be supported, for the “labourer is worthy of his hire:” but to the poor it is all-important that they should not be forced, unaided, to provide at once for *every* religious need. This consideration must come home especially to our clergy. By their enemies it is conveniently assumed that because they would not accept pensions they would reject, on behalf of the Catholic body, a share in the national Church property. Reject it! The expression has no meaning. It belongs to the nation as well as to that nation’s Church; and the nation uses it, *through* her clergy, for the joint good of all. It is “the children’s bread.”

V. It is the Catholic course. The Catholic Church is, indeed, not tied to any particular system as regards a provision for religious purposes. She will always suffer less from the voluntary system than other communities, even those that have freely chosen it, because her clergy, whether rich or poor, must be profoundly respected by their flocks on account of their sacerdotal character. That character is the root of the reverence paid them; and the extent of that reverence will ever be proportioned, not to their wealth, but to the fidelity with which they discharge the duties that belong to that character, and the dignity with which they sustain its sacred claims. But it is not less certain that, whereas the voluntary system has been forced on the Church, it has been the choice of Dissenters. With them religion is a matter of individualism, mistaken for personal piety, and too often, it is to be feared, of self-will or intellectual

caprice mistaken for Christian liberty. With them the "body" is nothing more than the *aggregate* of the believers who chance to be units in it. To them "Private Judgment" is a reality; it is comparatively but a theory or a watchword in the Anglican Church, which justly claims a *via media* position, has retained a hierarchy, and a ritual in the main ancient, asserts authority though equivocally, and not only affirms a traditional Creed but is itself a tradition—although, unhappily, but a National tradition. It was a natural effect of those sympathies which govern men unconsciously that, in the Dissenting sects, the general law of thought and feeling should determine the special relations between the sect and its ministers. Their idea of religion being this—that a knowledge of Revealed Truth is derived primarily from certain Biblical studies aided by divine graces imparted to each Christian irrespectively of the general body, it followed that the minister should be paid or dismissed, like the lawyer or physician; and it seemed of no vital importance if a straggler were left without his aid. In the Catholic Church, of course, an opposite principle prevails. In her the body is not the mere *aggregate* of individual believers—that is a mere name—but the divinely organised Whole which gives life to the parts. Faith is the heritage of millions who, owing to their youth or other causes, cannot even fancy themselves capable of discovering a Creed, each for himself; and her sacraments are the channels through which grace is communicated to rich and poor alike—to the learned and the simple. It could not, therefore, be her desire that religious ministrations should depend wholly on individual good will, much less upon the individual's ability to procure them. They may be most needed by those who appreciate them least; and it is pre-eminently to the Poor that the Gospel is preached. She has, indeed, had her mendicant orders, which in their place have done a great work; but they had renounced *all* worldly things, and *their* position was consistent and complete. There is a strength that belongs to poverty; and there is also a strength that belongs to moderate resources, honorably secured, and virtuously used: and in her amplitude both kinds of strength are nobly united. The converse holds equally true. There is a weakness which proceeds from excessive endowments; and there is a weakness which proceeds from the voluntary system;—these two are not by necessity disunited, and the faults of communities not endowed have sometimes been especially those of *old establishments*. The voluntary system may be the best at a particular moment; but it neither precludes the dangers of wealth nor those of poverty; and so far from uniting the merits of the

monastic with those of the secular life, it creates a condition different alike from both. The Church has ever condemned the error which substitutes an individual for a national confession of Religion. To her the "Voluntary System" never was congenial except under abnormal circumstances—before civil society had developed its full Christian character—in periods of persecution—or in her missions among barbarous races.

Still less has the system of State pensions ever been congenial to her. Distrust, most commonly, perhaps, arises from having trusted too much, and an unboastful independence is the true preservative against it. The Church does not naturally or willingly look on the State with suspicion, and she makes large allowance for the State's suspicions of her. She bears to it a true, though not servile reverence. Indeed, exalted as she is in her heavenly gifts and world-wide expansion, there is yet nothing within the narrower limits of national existence which so nearly resembles her in character, or so sensibly presents her image to men, as that august creation of God—the State. It bears the sword of Justice, while to her is committed the dispensation of Mercy. Relatively to its own subjects and citizens, it is, like her, a universal presence; and, though not eternal, it is yet immortal compared with their fleeting generations. Like her it has both rights and faculties which could inhere in no mere association of individuals, apart from that interior *communion* which gives them their political life. Like her, it is at once beneficent and exacting—securing the meanest from danger, anticipating the needs of the careless, crowning the lowliest with the highest gifts, but also imposing on the loftiest head the weight which steadies it, and binding each man with the restraint which is his safety. It too has its drag-chain as well as its wheels of progress, and is, therefore, often reviled by those whom it protects. The Church reveres the State, and inculcates loyalty to it, not merely because such is the divine command, nor chiefly because her own safety must require the obedience of men to such a compeer, so long as we are actuated by habits not by maxims alone, and so long as the same dispositions assert themselves in the civil and in the ecclesiastical sphere, however discriminated by philosophy or opposed to each other by untoward circumstances;—not for these reasons only, but because she sympathises with greatness in all its authentic forms. But it does not become her to be dependent on the State. For her, and for it, an unworthy dependence has consequences worse, in the long run, than those which result from her being outlawed by the State, or even proscribed by it. The ecclesiastical condition alike of France and of Ireland is abnormal religiously, and



unsatisfactory civilly. It is a thing remarkable, and to England honorable, that while the revolutionary or the imperial spirit (mutual enemies, but akin not less) have swept religious endowments successively from so many parts of Catholic Europe, they still subsist in England and in Ireland, though in Ireland they are alienated from their proper end. How is this circumstance to be accounted for? Thus:—The English Constitution has been progressive; but it has been conservative also. It has retained many of the institutions derived from Catholic ages and ancient principles, though lost elsewhere. That it has done so seems a confirmation so far of a theory affirmed by many learned Anglican divines, viz.:—that neither the English nation, nor the English Church, set itself by deliberate purpose in antagonism to the ancient order of things. It is, indeed, certain that under the influence of despotic sovereigns, who did not know their own minds, and of dynastic necessities, the nation drifted upon a course the original selection of which was not so much as referred to its choice; and it is also certain that the schism was widened by political confusions which associated the idea of Catholicism with that of despotic power, and foreign intervention:—it is, therefore, the less surprising that England has kept her hold of some Catholic institutions abandoned in many Continental countries. Is Catholic Ireland after the fiery trials and matchless fidelity of centuries to set her face against them? Is it for her to destroy them, or to pronounce that they shall never again exist for the behoof of Catholics?

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#### IV.

I HAVE answered some objections often urged against the principle of a fair distribution of Irish Church property as opposed to that of its destruction, and assigned some reasons in favour of the former course. I shall now indicate several further reasons, and glance at certain further objections which are connected with the supposed state of English parties.

VI. The just distribution of Church property is the constitutional course. Our Constitution has maintained the ancient system of national endowments in preference to those two modern alternatives, the voluntary system, or pensions from the State. One of the greatest modern philosophers has made this the foundation of his political teaching. Coleridge asserts that the sacred Reserve, divinely sanctioned in the Hebrew common-

wealth, was an institution substantially common to all the nobler races. He says—"The principle itself was common to Goth and Celt, or, rather, I would say, to all the tribes that had not fallen off to either of the *Aphelia*, or extreme distances from the generic character of man, the wild or the barbarous state, but who remained either constituent parts or appendages of the *stirps generosa seu historica*, as a philosophic friend has named that portion of the Semetic and Japetic races which had not degenerated below the conditions of progressive civilisation. It was, I say, common to all the primitive races, that in taking possession of a new country, and in the division of the land into heritable estates among the individual warriors or heads of families, a reserve should be made for the *nation itself*." . . .

"These, *the property and the nationality*, were the two constituent factors, the opposite but correspondent and reciprocally supporting counterweights of the commonwealth."\* This "nationalty" amongst us became invested in our national church, and "the object of the national church was to secure and improve that civilization, without which the nation could be neither permanent nor progressive." Its religious purpose was this—that the lowliest of the casual poor should not be deprived of man's true heritage:—"Try to conceive a man without the ideas of God, eternity, freedom, will, absolute truth, of the good, the true, the beautiful, the infinite;—an animal endowed with a memory of appearances and facts might remain; but the man will have vanished, and you have instead a creature *more subtle than any beast of the field*, but likewise *cursed above every beast of the field*."† The nationality had a social and political office also; it was "to form and train up the people of the country to be obedient, free, useful, organisable subjects, *citizens*, and patriots, living to the benefit of the State, and prepared to die for its defence."

I have already affirmed that a share in the national church property not only is nothing analogous to pensions, but stands opposed to them in principle and tendency. The quotations above made explain my meaning. A share in the nationality is a share in the *citizenship* of the nation. The "voluntary system," as imposed upon us three centuries ago by a giant "eviction," is exclusion from it; and pensions are an alms such as the State might give to aliens. Between the *nationalty* and that *nationality* of which we have heard much at home, and seen something of late in foreign countries, the connexion is plain. There is a negative nationality which means hostility to some other country:

\* Coleridge's *Church and State*, according to the *Idea* of each.

† Ibid.

there is a positive one which means the possession of what belongs to our own. I trust that Ireland does not despise nationality in that form in which it seems a practicable thing, and that England is not resolved to deny her what, in this form, is necessary both for her and for the empire. The State has an interest in this matter. Loyalty is the attribute of subjects; but a reverence for law proceeds from the sense of citizenship—which must be preceded by the condition of citizenship. Coleridge, whose philosophy so deeply appreciated the “national reserve,” would yet, by the strangest of paradoxes, have withheld it from the Catholic clergy. He stumbled against a polemical antagonism, and assumed that they were subject to a “foreign allegiance.” Had this judgment of them been right, he should have affirmed that they must neither be recognised nor tolerated, and—as a consequence—have bidden Ireland to depart. He had not apprehended that, according to the Catholic estimate, a “foreign allegiance,” as regards matters ecclesiastical, is found in the allegiance of the Church to the State. Men declaim about a “divided loyalty!” They have yet to learn that with the best intentions a man can be but half a loyalist who is not alike submissive, in the spiritual sphere to a universal, and, in the national sphere to the civil authority, rendering thus obedience at once to Cæsar and to God. But wisdom is progressive, and one of Coleridge’s noblest disciples applied his principle aright. Dr. Arnold, in 1834, made a stronger statement than I have made. He said—“The good Protestants and bad Christians have talked nonsense, and worse than nonsense, so long about Popery, the Beast and Antichrist . . . that the simple, just, and *Christian* measure of establishing the Roman Catholic Church in three-fifths of Ireland seems renounced by common consent . . . the Christian people of Ireland—*i. e.*, in my sense of the word, the Church of Ireland—have a right to have the full benefit of their church property, which now they cannot have, because Protestant clergymen they will not listen to.” It is singular how like his are the statements made by his successor in the chair of modern history at Oxford. It is thus that Professor Goldwin Smith speaks:—  
 . . . “The hold of the Irish establishment on the religious affections of the Irish people is a garrison of 20,000 men. At that price England purchases a source of just discontent and a permanent disaffection.” He might have added that at that price the Establishment itself purchases a place less creditable than it might otherwise claim. An Establishment which separates the “nationalty” from the nation becomes an endowed sect without the freedom of a sect.



VII. It is the practicable course. We shall fall into a deplorable error if we infer that because the Radical party has lately expressed sympathy with Ireland the Church question is most likely to be settled in accordance with extreme views. This is emphatically stated in a book characterised by the strongest hostility to the Irish Establishment—"If they (the Catholics) were to urge a better title to the Ecclesiastical revenues than that of the Protestants, it might be difficult to controvert such a claim; but to demand the exclusive appropriation of those funds to secular purposes, for which they were never intended, is a pretension unfounded in either justice or expediency, and which both the pride and the religious feeling of England will most assuredly resist." The policy of secularization is advocated by one political party alone. That party is the one least likely to benefit Ireland on the long run, and least capable of understanding what is best in her. The Liberals have repeatedly pledged themselves to the necessity of justice in this matter; while among the Tories are several, as Mr. Disraeli and Lord Lytton, whose expressions have been fully as strong; and every day there must grow up a larger number in both these historical parties to recognize, with Mr. Burke, the folly of alienating by injustice those who, as the children of a hierarchical Church resting on authority and antiquity, must naturally be the friends of order. But Liberals and Tories alike must oppose Religious Equality if asserted in a manner at variance with the Constitution. That Constitution cannot cease to recognise endowments for religious purposes, without endangering all that is cognate to them,—all that connects the present with the past, and provides for a future in harmony with both. There is one paramount question for the English legislator—"How will our mode of dealing with the Irish Establishment affect the English?" Now, of the two methods suggested, one must be fatal to the English Establishment, while the other could in no way injure it. Distribute the Irish Church property fairly between Catholics and Protestants, and you legislate on the ground of circumstances confessedly *special to Ireland*. At the Reformation the Irish people remained Catholic, and has remained such ever since. The problem is to-day what it was three centuries ago. It is not with churches as with individuals. The generations pass; property is bought, sold, and mortgaged; new proprietors take the place of old, and prescription makes their claims good. It is thus in Ireland. The settlement of property has gradually blended itself with the interests of every class, and so knitted itself to the whole structure of the body politic that the repeal of the Act of Settlement would now be,

not the amputation of a limb, but a more formidable operation—the extraction of a spine. It is thus in all nations. Were it otherwise wounds could never heal, and, property never becoming assured, the descendants of the earlier proprietors could never recover by industry, and by the gradual blending of races and interests, what can thus alone be permanently regained. Time creates prescriptive right; but while time *does* all, time *is* nothing. Races blend with time, but churches remain apart. Individuals die, but churches live. In Ireland the two ecclesiastical rivals stand face to face now, as the individual claimants for confiscated estates stood in the first generation alone. To England this principle does not apply. In England the nation became Protestant, and the sects successively separated from the Establishment. Again, the Catholics in Ireland form one solid and single body, whereas in England the Dissenters consist of separate bodies in frequent change. Lastly, there remains this momentous difference. The English sects left the Establishment in a large measure because they disapproved of endowments, and consequently they could not demand them. From the just distribution of Irish Church property the English Establishment would therefore have nothing to fear, for no precedent would be created by it. On the contrary, that Establishment would gain a new security. The English Dissenters claim to be nearly as numerous as the members of the Establishment. Count the Irish and English Churches as one, and there becomes at once a majority against the Establishment.

But, on the other hand, the secularization of Church property in Ireland would plainly be a precedent for England. All who are in favour of the voluntary system would say, “You have yielded to the demand of Catholic Ireland:—yield then to that of Protestant England. You might have satisfied the Irish by merely giving them a just share of that property the alienation of which was their wrong; but you can satisfy us in one way only. The wrong we complain of is that all do not rest alike on the voluntary system. On that principle we built our secession, and in it alone we believe.” It is nearly certain that to secularize the Irish Church property, would be to secularize the English; and thoughtful statesmen would resist in the beginning what they could not resist at the end. Those only would act otherwise who had always believed that the “final cause” of the Irish Establishment (to them otherwise inexplicable) was, that it might prove the scandal and confusion of the English, and eventually its ruin.

It is sometimes asserted that English statesmen would give Catholic Ireland endowments only in the form of pensions.

Facts disprove this. In the earlier part of the century pensions were indeed advocated more than once, but the progress subsequently made carried us beyond this point. The avowal was frankly made that the Irish Catholics must have their share of the Church property. Thus Mr. Charles Buller said, in 1844, "While we continue to perpetrate this bold and wanton outrage on the first principles of justice and good sense, the people of Ireland never will—nay, never ought to—believe in our justice or good will . . . He held that had Mr. Pitt been able to carry out his whole scheme, Ireland would have been as well governed as any country in the world. The time for paying the Irish clergy was, however, now past. It was one of the Sybilline books, irrecoverably missing . . . Were the Catholic clergy now to take the pay of the State they would lose all hold upon the people, and the Government would thus lose an instrument upon which we now must rely for the maintenance of anything like order in Ireland."\* Lord Fitzwilliam said, "Let him warn their lordships against ever making the Irish Roman Catholic Priesthood a stipendiary Priesthood, or pensioners on the Government." . . . "The Protestant rector and the Roman Catholic priest must be placed upon precisely the *same footing*—they must both be made to feel that they had an interest *in the soil*."† Again, Mr. Edward Ellice said "He thought it essential upon this, probably the first step in a new course of ecclesiastical policy in respect to Ireland, to make a protest, so far as he was able, against taking from *the taxes of the country* means for the support of any ecclesiastical establishment in Ireland."‡ Once more, Sir Charles Wood said, "The settlers in Ireland had frequently been called the 'Protestant garrison' of that country. He must do them justice; they had gallantly performed their duty: but the times for such a course were gone." . . . "If Ireland now were to be governed at all, she must be governed upon just principles." . . . "Mr. Pitt proposed to pay the Roman Catholic clergy, but the project failed. Another attempt with the same object was made in 1825, which also failed. He believed the time for any such purpose was gone by." . . . "The Establishment was for the living people and not for the land." The same principle was maintained by many others, including Lord Brougham, Lord Russell, Lord Palmerston, and Lord Grey, who plainly asserted, "If you admit that you must govern Ireland, so as to obtain the good will and affections of the Irish people,

\* "The Church Establishment of Ireland," p. 17.

† *Ibid*, p. 18.

‡ *Ibid*, p. 52.



you ought to legislate as a Parliament sitting in Dublin, and freely representing the Irish people."

What would be the purpose of statesmen in offering pensions to the clergy? To satisfy the people, and to stand well with their pastors. If so, the moment they discovered that pensions were hated by both, the same motives would forbid such an offer. Would not a politician, who understood the Irish clergy so little as to think he could bribe them, and the Irish people so little as to imagine that a bribed clergy could maintain social order, be deterred from such an enterprise by the thought that the Government money, if accepted, might be applied to purposes not identical with those intended, and by a fear that the recipients of it might be sometimes driven, in order to avoid painful imputations, upon courses to which they are less tempted now? But the whole theory is a chimera. Statesmen would not be so anxious to support the Catholic clergy of Ireland mainly out of English resources, just as they do not aspire to put the Irish county rates or poor rate upon England: and if the endeavour were made it would fail. How strange are the politics of spleen! They assume that the Irish people are ready to destroy their own Church property in order to spite the Protestants, and again that English statesmen are ready to tax England in order to spite the Irish bishops! They are convinced that England never would take a penny from the Irish Establishment in order to win Ireland by letting her have her rights; but they think that England might be induced to confiscate the whole of its property to do good to no one!

In calculating the course likely to be taken by statesmen on this subject we have to bear in mind their religious as well as their political prepossessions. In the debates between 1833 and 1845 we do not find any eminent statesman asserting that no injury would be done to religion by the secularization of all Church property in Ireland; but we find many affirming, like Lord Lansdowne, that the present position of the ascendant minority is the greatest injury as well as discredit to Protestantism itself. Thus Lord Granville said, in 1845, "The cause why that institution had not prospered as a national Church was mainly attributable to Government protection;" and Earl Grey affirmed, "the maintenance of that Church has been the great obstacle to the spread of the Protestant religion." It is but in a modified sense that a Catholic could sanction these statements; but he willingly concedes that Protestant Ascendency has lowered the type of Irish Protestantism, and thus injured those it was intended to benefit. He concedes also that the destruction of all endowments, far from remedying that evil (as their

just distribution would) must aggravate it, and thus inflict a religious injury upon one class of Ireland's sons, without conferring any benefit on the nation at large. From this an inference follows. If we endeavour simply to pull down the present Irish Establishment, in place of making an ecclesiastical settlement on the terms of equality, we had better consider whether we may not create such a counter-agitation in England as will greatly strengthen it. About thirty years ago there was an anti-tithe war, and many believed that the Irish Establishment was doomed. But the Irish party did not adopt a principle capable of imparting strength to their cause, or worth sustaining against difficulties :—and the hands that weary themselves with beating the air are sure to fall ere long in listless helplessness. The result was that some specious reforms were made in the Establishment, and the time for real action was indefinitely postponed. Should this happen again it will be attended with even worse results.

Those among us who mistake for a great principle that “voluntary principle” which is but the “free, *unhoused* condition” of one whose house was burned over his head, assure us that even if the whole of the Church property were offered to them they would refuse it. In this they are consistent. But when they say they would secularize it, and yet apply it to national uses, they walk in a vain dream. Give them their own way and still they fail. The benefit they would confer on the nation is something that it already possesses, or is entitled to from other sources, as we have already seen. By their proposed transference they could no more add to the nation's wealth than they could raise the level of a lake by transferring the water from one side of it to the other. They might, indeed, secularize Church property—and on the same principle they might change the ancient cathedrals (holy still, no matter in what hands), into railway stations; and they might build schools out of the ruins of old abbeys—“plunder churches to endow a school!”—but the railway stations and the schools would, if wanted, be equally ours in good time, without this sacrifice to “general utility!” This is not all. If we refused to receive back, as such, a share of the Church property, we should have no claim whatsoever to apply it to other purposes, selected by ourselves. We have a right to demand Religious Equality, but not to insist on receiving it in one way only, and that a way unknown to Catholic times, injurious to our neighbour, and profitable only to those who have no right to such profit. *To refuse redress would be to condone the wrong.* If the Church abdicates, the State steps into her place. King James I. demanded of Bishops

White and Andrews whether the Crown had not a right to the episcopal lands. The former answered—"Surely, your majesty hath the right, for you are the very breath of our nostrils." "And how sayest thou, Dr. Andrews?" continued the king. "Surely," replied the more wary prelate, "your Majesty hath a right to my brother White's lands, *because he giveth them unto your Majesty.*"

Some persons assure us that the "spirit of the age" is opposed to Religious Endowments. The age, like the individual, is attended by two spirits, and one of these is an apostate one. Assuming, however, the correctness of the prophecy implied, it is irrelevant. Inevitable wrongs are not only deprived of their best consolation, but are rendered infinitely worse by the mean complicity of the wronged. The conscience of the guilty party is stultified as well as hardened by such tricky complicity; and—the sound principle being once surrendered—there remains no power of resisting the next aggression, and none of recovering what has been lost. To contend for the Right, and to fail, is the next best thing to victory.

We are sometimes told that the principle of "levelling up" would require something also of levelling down. This is a mistake. That principle would require simply that the Irish Church property—such as it is or such as it may be made—should be equitably divided between the Catholics and the Protestants. If the wealth of the Protestant church should be diminished, this would be, not because the principle I assert requires any such diminution, but because a legislature mainly Protestant did not think it desirable that the Protestant endowment in Ireland should be, when compared to the number of the laity, three or four times larger than it is in England. I have shewn elsewhere\* that the gross revenue of the Irish Establishment amounts to 17s. 3d. on each member of the laity, or more, and that in England the proportion is about one-third of this, or less. The population of the Established Church throughout Ireland is reckoned in the census of 1861 at 693,357; and its gross revenue is estimated in the Stackpool Returns at £586,428 yearly, without counting the value of the glebe houses, and other very considerable sources of income. Nor is this all. Of that church population the whole is included within the three consolidated dioceses of Armagh, of Down, and of Dublin, with the exception of 276,346 persons dispersed over the remaining nine dioceses of the Establishment. It would be for Parliament to decide, respecting, of course, vested interests—and I hope it may never

\* "The Church Settlement of Ireland."



decide such questions in a niggardly spirit—whether the population of one large-sized English town, scattered over more than three-quarters of Ireland, is the better for possessing such wealth as exists nowhere else. For the Catholic Church I should never desire excessive wealth. I think the system that mingles endowments with voluntary contributions is the best and the freest. For other communities it would be presumptuous in me to speak. Both for their own sake, and for Catholic interests, I wish them nothing but good; but, however I may differ from them, I do not think so meanly of them as to identify that good with the maintenance of injustice.

Imaginary difficulties are sometimes made respecting the just distribution of church property, considered in its smaller details. The Irish Dissenters are too few and ephemeral to claim a share in it, even if they approved of endowments. The Presbyterians have their *Regium Donum*, which, if insufficient, can be augmented. At all events, living as they do in a comparatively compact mass, their claim could not extend beyond a share of the Church property in some parts of Ulster. As regards Catholics and Church Protestants, the principle of equality would by necessity be applied, not in a mathematical but in a moral sense. Some persons insist upon an exact definition of the relative proportions in which the Church property should be divided. There is no definition which they would not object to. It may be frankly admitted that those who disapprove the principle will never approve the details; but to them only will there seem any serious difficulty in this matter. A true logician sees at once the distinction between logic in the pure domain of thought, and logic applied within that of social life. In the latter, logic has always to abate somewhat of its technical precision that it may preserve its intellectual method and moral purpose, as metals admit of alloy that they may become malleable. The logical pedantry that refuses such concessions would simply banish logic from the domain of practical things. It would repudiate principles because it could not realise them in the form of exact and invariable rules. We must fling aside these pruderies, which have but an equivocal relation with sound morals. Above all, we must not mix together rhetorical assumptions with logical exactions. It is practically absurd to deny the possibility of doing equal justice to the Catholics and Protestants of Ireland except through equality of loss. It is a logical sophism, no less, to insist upon a mathematical equality between two communities which equally indeed possess rights, but which include also the greatest differences both essential and accidental, and to deal equally with which *must*

therefore ever be an approximate thing, like cutting equal slices from a globe and a cube. We must look at these things in a manly way, and not mistake cavils and small points for political logic. A man who insists on an equality based exclusively on numbers will find it difficult to prove that this assumption, confessedly empirical when applied to parliamentary representation, constitutes a complete philosophy as regards the distribution of Church property, or is strictly consistent with the precedents of any country or age. A clever questioner, moreover, may chance to meet questions as sharp as his own, and more weighty. A Protestant opponent may ask him—"Are you going to make concessions to the State *exactly equal* to those which Protestants make?"—To which our answer is that we can never concede the smallest particle of our freedom. A Catholic may ask—"You ignore the circumstance that the Church Protestants are widely scattered, which circumstance is injurious to us Catholics in the arithmetical calculation:—do you also ignore the fact that the Presbyterians are concentrated, which is to our advantage? Supposing that all the Church Protestants inhabited one single city, would you ignore that circumstance?" Another might say—"You are so punctilious as to the scales with which you weigh justice—scruple and drachm—that you seem to jest, and tempt us to jest also. Do you admit that you forfeit all claim to be thought a just man if the servant in your household who requires most food eats more than the servant who requires least, or than the child who might be killed by a surfeit?" Singularly enough, this question about fractions seems most to disturb those who occasionally affirm that the Catholics are the better for having no endowments at all! The only answer their question admits is this—that as soon as the principle of a just distribution has been agreed to upon both sides, the details must be settled, as they are in all practical affairs, by arrangements which include mutual concessions, but not a sacrifice of principle. We must lift up our minds above the horizon of a "minute philosophy," and remember that this high matter is not mainly a financial, but a moral and political one. A basis will be laid for Ireland's peace when a change has been made in which men of sense can recognise the fact that Religious Equality has been *practically* substituted for an Ascendency, the record and symbol of all her woes and shames.

I have never yet heard one good reason for the alienation of our church property from its original and sacred purpose—not one that touches on a principle—not one that tends to the weal of religion, or the happiness of Ireland. One might suppose it was unreasonable to demand such a reason. I hear nothing except

theories about party combinations, and assurances that if we trust to the *popularis aura* we shall be wafted into Paradise. Statesmen, it is said, will relinquish their most cherished convictions in a sudden alarm, scared as Sir Robert Peel and the Duke of Wellington were after the Clare election. There is no greater mistake than that of confounding the alarm of brave men with that of cowards. The former class learn from experience because they have courage, and change their opinions because they were wrong. Such men were Peel and Wellington; and I hope that our soldiers and sailors may ever be cowards in the sense in which they were. They abandoned prescriptive illusions; but they would not have been intimidated into passing wrong measures. It is so with the best statesmen of our own time. New political exigencies will dispel their old prejudices, but will not force them to abandon their solid convictions. We are sometimes told that our natural allies are the English Radicals! That seems strange. It would not have pleased those Catholic loyalists of Ireland, who, at the time of the great rebellion, stood by their Sovereign, while they insisted also on the freedom of their religion; nor those in the next generation who fought at once for their king, their parliament, their country, and their liberty—and are still branded as rebels by those who give royal honours to General Garibaldi. It would not have pleased our countrymen in earlier days, who, whether they defended the rights of a Gaelic prince or a Norman Palatine, were ever loyalists at heart. Of course religion and politics lie in different spheres; still, it seems a paradox that men who hold what are called the most “advanced” views in politics should be the only allies fit for those who, alike in religion and social usages, rest on antiquity, and have suffered much from revolutions. However, they are our friends, we are told, and they would be hurt if we demanded our Church property! In that case they must be very undesirable friends. I can understand their preferring something else for us—something that has especial relations with their own interests; but surely conscience and reason would compel them to help us to our own as an improvement on the present system. I can understand their wanting our aid, and offering theirs on terms; but the terms must be compatible with our principles, our interests and the rights of *all* our fellow-countrymen. To remove us from that solid ground is to keep up the old system of ruling by dividing, which has so long made Ireland contemptible. Allies are sometimes formidable. Our proposed allies belong to the “voluntary” school;—but the voluntary principle applies to educational as well as to religious purposes. We want endowments for our University



and for middle class schools ; nor are we prepared to surrender those which support our poor schools or our chaplaincies. What if we should intend to accompany our new friends for one mile, and they should insist on accompanying us for twain ?

Again, Catholics are sometimes told that the Dissenters are their best political allies. Why so ? We are at opposite poles of thought ; our traditions are at variance ; and, on the long run, politics rest on sympathies and antipathies as much as upon either interests or principles. We assisted the Dissenters to win their civil liberties, and they were very obliging to us just then ; but, if I mistake not, they turned against us on critical occasions. I do not know how many of them voted for the increased grant to Maynooth ; but it certainly was not so by their aid, but by that of Lord Aberdeen, and Lord Monteagle, and Lord Herbert, of Sir James Graham and Mr. Gladstone, that we defended ourselves against an "aggression" which Ireland had not provoked—the "Ecclesiastical Titles Bill." If ever they need our aid again to protect their liberties they shall have it. They shall have it if the freedom of their religious organization, or of their education, is assailed—two things in which they have not always respected the liberty of Catholics. They shall have it because this is required by justice, and by all the best interests of the country. They have an important place in the Commonwealth ; but they are not in sympathy with us ; and if our principles were such as they imagine them to be, it would be their duty to oppose us, or at least to contract with us no alliance, except one likely to draw us away from our true strength, which is to be found in those principles alone. Observe the attitude of the Ulster Presbyterians. Belfast College is almost wholly in the hands of Protestants ; yet they cannot endure that the Government should make any University reforms calculated to give fair play to Catholics. Their able urgency introduced into the National system of education several changes not favourable to the mass of the people ; but, those changes once made, they nailed their weathercock to the mast, and proclaimed that everything in that system must be immutable. This small body sends a deputation first to Dublin and next to London, and dictates a legislation for all Ireland ! What is the cause ? "Imperfect sympathies." From such exploits we may infer how the Dissenters regard Catholics. They dislike the Anglican Church chiefly because they see in it a resemblance to the Catholic. We should be ill-advised to plagiarise from their principles in the hope of retaining their alliance. There existed among the English Catholics at the beginning of this century a certain club full

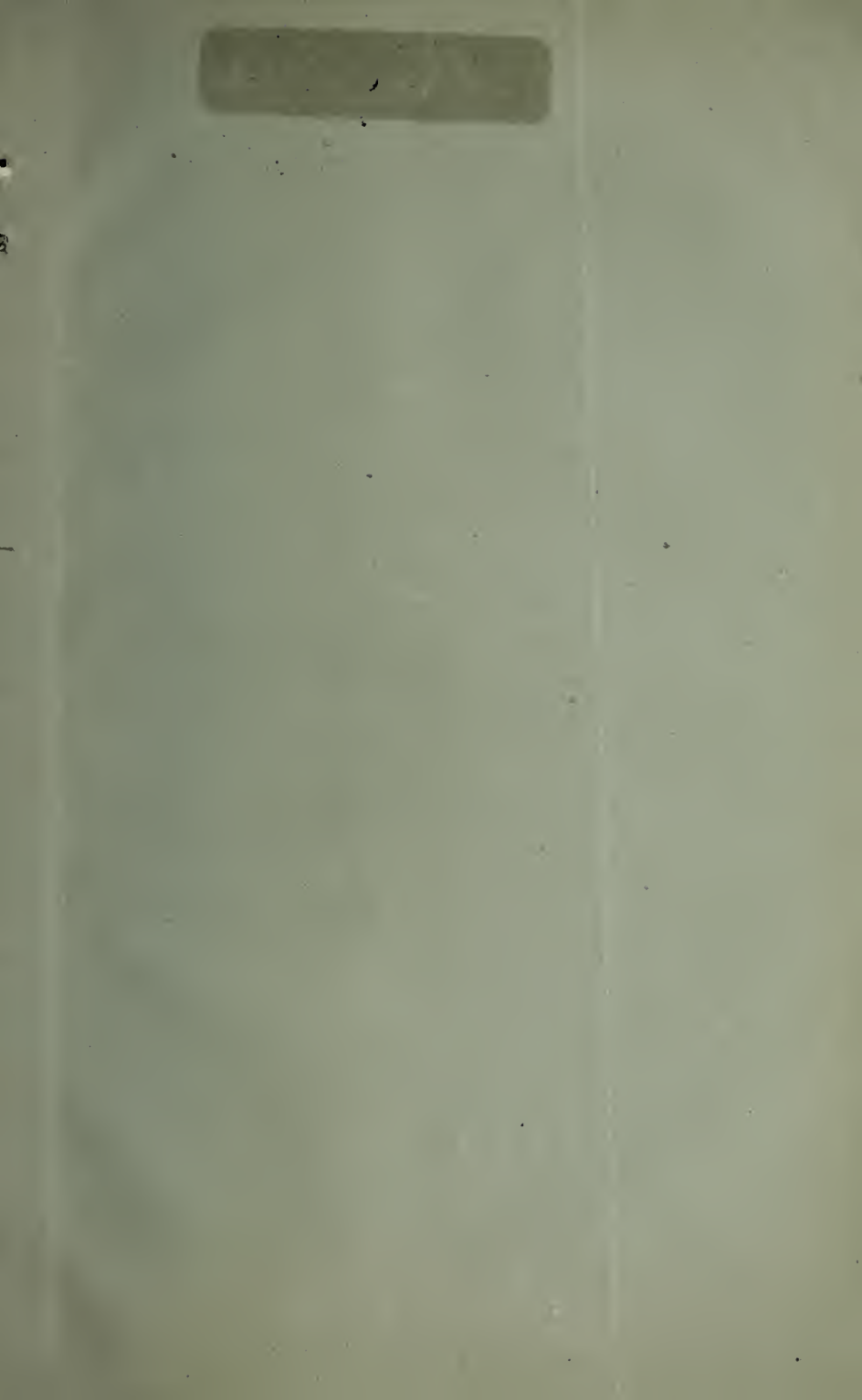
of "faith and fear"—that is, it had a great fear of opinion, and a great faith in expedients. In this faith and fear it recommended to the descendants of those who had faced the tempests of centuries a very notable device—that of emblazoning upon their banners in future the title of "His Majesty's Catholic Dissenting Subjects." I do not know that they made much of this dexterous move, which resembled the Knight's move at chess that always takes one by surprise, more than the deeds of the knights of old. Eventually when we were received back into the Constitution it was not in disguise; and the English statesmen who so largely assisted us were those who belonged to the historical schools of politics.

Far from snatching at the principles of others, I think we had better impart to them our own. They alone reconcile freedom with stability, the rights of the individual with the hierarchy of society, because they alone are based, not upon that fiction, the Natural Equality of man, but upon that truth, the Spiritual Equality of Redeemed Humanity. The expression "levelling up" has been called a novelty and obscure. It is on "levelling up" that Christianity has been engaged ever since it declared war upon serfdom and laid the foundations of a Christendom. The obscurity may be dissipated by degrees. It is not only to the question of the Irish Church that the principle applies. On the power of statesmen to understand it will depend their power of solving both in Europe and America all the great political problems of the coming time. Destruction is an easy thing—construction is an arduous but noble one. It is something to create—it is something to preserve—but in restoration—not the restoration of conventional details, but the restoration of permanent principles—what is great in both stands united. This is our work in Ireland, and every English statesman, wise or capable of wisdom, even if he begins with opposing, will end with applauding it.

There are those to whom everything in politics is a game or a jest, but with us it must not be so; the greatness of our cause forbids it. There are those who ever seek short cuts, and lose themselves in quagmires; but with us it must not be so; the goal stands right before us, and we have but to run straight. It is not for us to consult auguries, or vaticinate about party combinations, or throw in a Church to balance the trembling scale. Alas! how much are men deluded by what is near! How easily can a pebble, held close to the eye, blot sun and moon from the firmament! We must think of the great things of the past and future, for they are essential, and pass by the accidents of the moment. The religious question of Ireland

will be settled by no clever devices, or startling leaps, but by the progress, whether rapid or slow, of just principles and generous aims in her and in England. Let parties act as they please ;—the time will come when no party will think that it can do without Ireland. Ireland is not to be won by fair speeches in the mouth of one party, nor is she to be held and disposed of as if she were a farm, the hereditary possession of another. Those who assert the cause of a Nation and its Faith have nothing eventually to fear but themselves—they must be vigilantly conscientious, and they must never compromise the dignity of that cause, which is, in a large part, its strength. The Catholic cause is not a sectarian one ;—it is that of justice, a faithful adherence to which, as distinguished from what faction calls zeal, is, in politics, the chief note of a statesman truly religious. It is the cause of peace also, and we must sustain it in the spirit of peace, remembering that Ireland has need of all her sons, and that it little becomes us, deliberating on matters of gravest religious importance, to permit our blood to be agitated by the passions of the inferior animals. With whom should we be incensed? Those whose unhappy inheritance it is to defend a fortress that frowns on their country are yet often but acting much as we might have acted in their place. It is the cause of Ireland, and of her Church. Would that we had known this in time! The moment we had attained our civil freedom it became our primary duty to vindicate the rights of religion. Had we sought first what was spiritual the other things which we truly needed would have been “added unto us.” But we preferred what flattered the imagination to that which was precious to the soul. Let us now accept our lesson, and demand the equal rights of our Church, insisting upon this one thing—no less and no more—and bearing in mind that Powers greater than our own are at our side, if, having once asserted this sacred cause, we uphold and advance the same with invincible fortitude by all just and expedient means known to the Constitution, and by them alone. If England thinks of nothing but pensions, and Ireland of nothing but the confiscation of Church property, much may be said but nothing can be done. The question that torments both countries will remain. I have endeavoured to indicate the common ground upon which just men in both may take their stand—not ignorant that my opinions will displease many persons, both Catholics and Protestants, but remembering that to please is no man’s duty, and that Truth, if once presented to truthful minds, though by the feeblest advocate, advances by its proper strength and prospers on its way.







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